

BLOODY



A GUIDE ON

HOW TO BLEED

Blood Moon

A Guide on How To Bleed

This booklet contains a comprehensive list of resources and how to's for a thorough understanding of your emergency birth control/abortion options. It is written for educational purposes only.

Before we get started, we wanted to make an acknowledgement of the forces of racism and colonization that have been a part of the abortion movement for generations. This booklet is written with a broken heart for all the communities that have been affected by eugenics within the medical establishment, for all the indigenous, black and brown people that had the decision of sterilization forced upon them, to the detriment of their families, communities, and spiritual selves, and to the many people who were victims of medical experimentation, either through misinformation, deceit or forced participation in the development of hormonal birth control and other gynecologic advancements dating back to enslavement.

This booklet was written to honor the right of all people to say no to pregnancy for whatever reason. But this booklet will never be complete without being matched by access to safe, affordable, competent, and culturally supportive methods of contraceptives, abortion and continuing pregnancy to birth, whichever is one's desire.

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How this Booklet is Organized

This booklet is meant as a comprehensive guide on abortion care. We wanted to be sure to offer as complete an understanding as possible on each option available when someone is interested in initiating miscarriage. We wanted to be sure that this knowledge was written with consideration towards the different ways people relate to their bodies and how gender identity can affect comfort or isolation in this process. We also wanted to make sure to be clear about people's options when race and legal status may be an issue to receive the desired level of care.

First, we will go over common rhythms in hormonal cycles and menstruation, to ensure a basic understanding of what is actually happening inside your body. With a break down of each individual phase of the cycle, we will start to go over each option that is available within that phase. Some options are specific to certain phases of the cycle, while others have a larger window in which to work.

These options include:

Herbal contraceptives

The morning after pill or IUD

Herbal abortifacients

Menstrual extraction

The abortion pill

Clinical abortion

We have tried to include personal stories about each option. These stories were also used to backup our research. We hope to have more stories and artwork in the future to add to this booklet. If you are inspired to share your story, please do. You can email us at the email address listed below.

We will also go over medical contraindications, how to read the blood when you start bleeding, issues around blood type, options for aftercare, and other places for sourcing more information or the necessary materials for the different procedures.

Any questions, concerns, stories or artwork can be emailed to blood_moon@riseup.net.

Navigating Queer Experience/Body **Dysphoria During Abortion**

We understand how complicated it can be and feel to be pregnant when our lives exist outside of a standard gender binary. Pregnancy and abortion can force us into contending with so many layers of oppressive belief systems; challenging all the physical and emotional work we have put into creating our lives and our selves. No one wants to face the potential of intentional misgendering when seeking out clinics or reckoning with a surge in hormones we may wish our bodies didn't produce to begin with or assumptions of heterosexuality by the people treating us. It's easy enough to feel isolated even when you have supportive people around you. We want to touch for a minute on the issues that we face as trans, non-binary, gender-nonconforming, gay or queer, when navigating the shifted experience of our bodies while also navigating the cis and hetero-centric world that is reproductive health.

What allows each of us to hold onto our sense of selves and remain comfortable within our bodies will be highly individual, as we are all very unique in our ways of being and needs. Yes, this pregnancy may be a challenge for you and you may experience

difficulty recognizing yourself in this experience of your body, but this experience doesn't have to define who you are in this world. This could be a good period for you to prioritize some activities that empower and reinforce who you are and how you want to be seen in the world.

If you are having a difficult time feeling safe in your body during this time, it is okay to take space from it, but let this happen in a supportive and nurturing way. Shame and stigma can be overpowering, but you do not need to believe those stories. Shame and stigma do not need to dictate this experience. It is totally normal when health issues arise to become depressed and to have a hard time staying present. You may feel emotionally or physically numb. It is okay to feel that; your body is going through a big experience, and it's very intelligent. Don't fight yourself. Allow yourself to create the boundaries you need to feel safe. When you give yourself this space, you will have an easier time coming back into your body when the process is over. It is also important, if you are having trouble staying in your body, not to let that lead you into neglecting to act in a timely manner. Make the appointments that you need to, find the resources or the people that will be able to help you get through this. This could be a useful time to enlist the help of a supportive friend, someone who

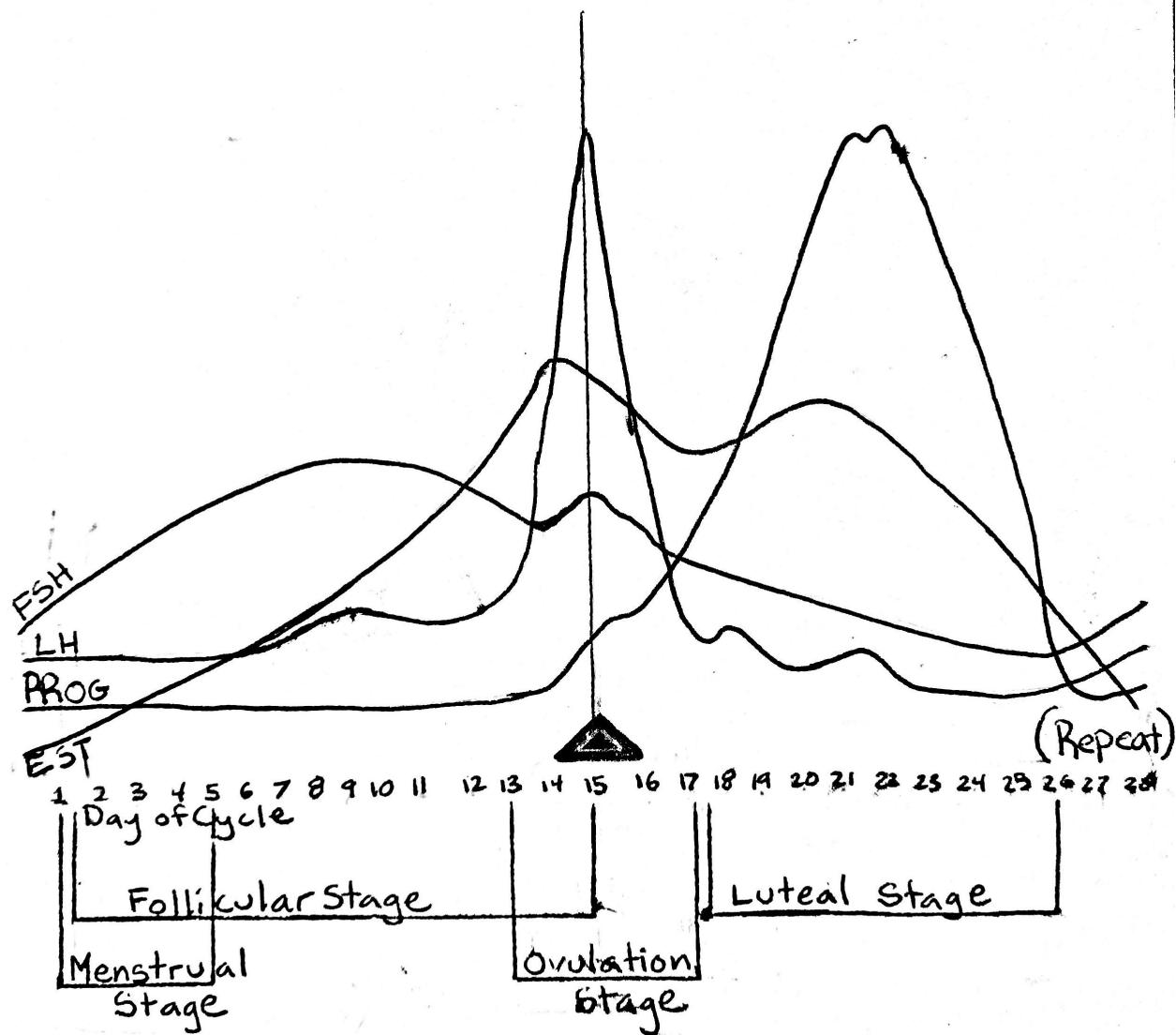
can physically help to make all of this happen or someone available to vent the hard emotions with and help you to make a game plan.

If you are planning to have an abortion at a clinic this can have its own set of challenges. If you are a marginalized person of color you may already be accustomed to a certain level of violence from medical establishments. The lineage of eugenics may still be close to you and your family. It can be hard to know exactly how people will treat us in these environments. Experience may tell us that disrespect and disregard and, potentially, blatant violence are imminent in this setting. We hope that this zine will help to inform you of all of your options so that you can seek the route that is most safe for you.

Remember: How one gets pregnant in relation to one's sexual orientation or gender identity is nobody's business, including health providers unless you volunteer them information regarding your health needs. If you have an unintended or unsupportable pregnancy it is important that you feel able to request an abortion and do not feel pressured into explaining how you got pregnant.

Tips to help get through the abortion experience:

- A friend that you can be open with about your emotional process
- Warm drinks or food that help to feed your spirit and help you feel nourished.
- Written reminders that you are really brave and you can do it
- Seek out the support of an abortion collective or support group
- Plan fun activities with yourself or people you care about to keep your spirits up
- Allow yourself as much rest time as you want
- Sometimes it helps to create an alternate persona while you are at an abortion clinic, then when it is over you can be just you again.
- Let yourself cry
- Homeopathic arnica, or arnica flower essence, to help bring you back into your body, when you're ready
- Let your body shake off the trauma and tension
- Read some good queer stories/ watch happy queer movies/tv



This chart is based on an average 28 day cycle.

The Four Stages of the Menstrual Cycle

Menstrual Stage

The menstrual phase is the first stage. It's also when you get your period.

This phase starts when an egg from the previous cycle isn't fertilized. Because pregnancy hasn't taken place, levels of the hormones estrogen and progesterone drop.

The thickened lining of your uterus, which would support a pregnancy, is no longer needed, so it sheds through your vagina. During your period, you release a combination of blood, mucus, and tissue from your uterus.

If you are currently bleeding and had potential exposure, you can use options for Phase One during this time.

If your period hasn't come and you believe you are pregnant, then you would use options for Phase Three or Phase Four.

Follicular Stage

The follicular stage starts on the first day of your period (so there is some overlap with the menstrual phase) and ends when you ovulate.

It starts when the hypothalamus sends a signal to your pituitary gland to release follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH). This hormone stimulates your ovaries to produce around 5 to 20 small sacs called follicles. Each follicle contains an immature egg. FSH will drop only allowing for 1 follicle(sometimes more) to mature. The follicle will start to produce estradiol (a form of estrogen) which breaks down the other follicles.

The maturing follicle sets off a surge in estrogen that thickens the lining of your uterus. This creates a nutrient-rich environment for an embryo to grow.

In this stage you would focus on your options included in Phase One.

Ovulation Stage

Rising estrogen levels during the follicular phase trigger your pituitary gland to release luteinizing hormone (LH) which starts the process of ovulation.

Ovulation is when your ovary releases a mature egg. The egg travels down the fallopian tube toward the uterus to be fertilized by sperm.

The ovulation stage is the only time during your menstrual cycle when you can get pregnant(exposure outside of this stage is still possible). You can tell that you're ovulating by symptoms like these:

- a slight rise in basal body temperature
- thicker discharge that has the texture of egg whites
- Some people experience light cramping on one side of the lower abdomen
- An increase in libido

The egg survives up to 48 hours before it can no longer be fertilized. (Sperm can last up to 5 days before it dies. Therefore the window of potential pregnancy is about 10 days- 5 days before and after ovulation).

In this stage you would focus on your options included in Phase One.

Luteal Stage

After the follicle releases its egg, it changes into the corpus luteum. This structure releases hormones, mainly progesterone and some estrogen. The rise in hormones keeps your uterine lining thick and ready for a fertilized egg to implant.

If you do get pregnant, your body will produce human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG). This is the hormone pregnancy tests detect. It helps maintain the corpus luteum and keeps the uterine lining thick.

If you don't get pregnant, the corpus luteum will shrink away and be reabsorbed. This leads to decreased levels of estrogen and progesterone, which causes the onset of your period. The uterine lining will shed during your period.

Progesterone inhibits oxytocin, causing the uterine muscles to relax and contract less. Oxytocin stimulates contractions associated with labor, which would be desirable if attempting to stimulate menstruation or end pregnancy.

During this time use options for Phase Two.

At the end of the Luteal Stage we end up back at the Menstrual Stage. Here you either begin to bleed and continue in the cyclic pattern or your body begins the process of maintaining pregnancy.



Phase One

Phase one begins during ovulation, at the point of conception, until implantation, until just before menstruation is due. Weeks one and two. After ovulation your body starts producing the hormone progesterone which helps create a supportive environment in the uterus for the egg to attach and grow. The egg will usually implant during the middle or end of week two (counting from ovulation).

When taking herbs during this phase the focus will be on herbs that block, alter or interfere with the body's production of progesterone. This will make the uterus inhospitable and prevent implantation.

OPTIONS FOR PHASE ONE:

1. Herbal Contraceptives
2. Morning after pill
3. Wait for Phase Two

Herbal Contraceptives

Queen Anne's Lace: *Daucus Carota* (wild carrot)

Progesterone blocker contains Estrogenic Properties, stimulates the uterus. Delays ovulation.

Take right after exposure to sperm and again 8 hours after. This plant can be used on a regular basis if exposure is regular. If exposure is during your fertile phase, take herb every 8 hours for 5 days. Use may affect the duration and flow of the menstrual cycle.

1-2 tsp seed chewed or powdered, every 8 hours for 5 days
3mls/1.5 tsp/30 drops of tincture(flower and seed) every 8 hours for 5 days

Don't take while also taking hormonal medications, lactating, if you don't have a normal menstrual cycle, if you recently got off of hormonal medications, if you experience rapid changes in cycle, or experience breast tenderness when taking the herb.

Cotton Root Bark: *Gossypium Hirsutum*

This plant disrupts the production of progesterone and increases receptor sites of oxytocin sensitive cells. Cotton root bark is known to bring on menstruation, so if the fertile phase is

unknown, and you take cotton root bark you could start your period early.

Tincture: 1ml/1/2 tsp/20 drops 3 times a day for 5 days after exposure during fertile phase of cycle

Decoction: 100 grams dried root in liter of water, simmer covered 20-30 minutes . Take 2-4 tablespoons every 30-60 minutes or sip continuously throughout the day for 5 days.

Chewing on small pieces of the roots all day for five days

Note: only use organically grown cotton due to heavy pesticide use

Considered very safe for short term use(under 14 days), prolonged use can cause atrophy of the uterine lining.

Rue: *Ruta graveolens*

This plant contains rutin which strengthens arteries and veins, decreasing capillary permeability in the uterine tissue, causing the uterus to become non-nutritive to the fertilized egg.

Infusion: 1-2 tbsps in a quart of water, steeped for 10 minutes.

Drink throughout the day.

Tincture: 5-15 drops, 3-4 times daily

Capsules: 1-4 , 3-4 times daily

Use for 5 days after exposure, while watching for symptoms of toxicity.

People with heart, liver or kidney issues should not use rue.

Stimulates uterus and nervous system, should not be used in excess or for prolonged periods.

Taking rutin capsules may cause you to feel anxious or fearful due to the effect of keeping adrenaline in the bloodstream. Potential for drug interaction with blood thinner agents.

Contraindicated:while taking any medication that increases your sensitivity to sunlight due to potentiation.

Symptoms of toxicity or overdose may include stomach pain, vomiting, convulsions, mood and sleep issues.

Do not use it during lactation, it may increase sensitivity to sunlight.

Juniper: *Juniperus communis*

Contains rutin and thujone*

Works as an implantation inhibitor as well as an abortifacient

Ripe berries and leaves are used. The unripe but full grown berries have a higher volume of the essential oil. So adjust dosage as needed.

Infusion: 1-2 tbsp in quart of water, steeped for 10-20 minutes. Drink throughout the day.

Tincture: 5-20 drops taken 2-3 times daily.

As an inhibitor take 5 days before and after ovulation

After exposure it takes 5 days.

Contraindications: Anyone with existing kidney or liver issues or nerve damage should not use them. May interfere with absorption of iron and other minerals, increase urination, irritate kidneys. Not of use during lactation. People who experience epileptic seizures should not ingest plants containing thujone.

*Thujone will be discussed in more detail in later phases.

Neem Leaf Powder: Azadirachta indica

Lots of research has been done in India in regards to neem and its contraceptive effects. It seems to have several contraceptive applications, The oil from the plant can be used as a spermicide, the powdered plant can be used as an oral contraceptive for those people that produce sperm, and two other options which would only be available through qualified medical research personnel at this time.

Neem Oil:

____ Insert vaginally before or after having unprotected sex

Neem Powder Capsules:

_____ 2 capsules taken 3 times daily before meals. Requires 1 month to be fully effective. Effects are reversible

DO NOT TAKE NEEM OIL INTERNALLY

Neem Leaf tablets or capsules provide people that produce sperm with an alternative oral contraceptive option.

Take 1 capsule of neem leaf powder daily. It takes about 6 weeks to become completely effective. The effects are reversed within 6 weeks after use is discontinued. No side effects have been encountered and no changes to performance or libido.

http://www.sisterzeus.com/neem_men.html

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK234639/>*

*Warning that this article link uses a lot of language about population control

The Morning after Pill/IUD- Emergency

Contraception

There are 2 clinical ways to prevent pregnancy after you have unprotected sex:

Take an emergency contraceptive pill (AKA the morning-after pill) or get a Paragard(copper) IUD. Both methods need to be used within 120 hours (5 days) after having unprotected sex.

There are 2 types of morning-after pills:

First, a pill with ulipristal acetate. There's only one brand, called ella.

Ella requires a prescription from a nurse or doctor to get, but you can get a fast medical consultation and prescription with next-day delivery online, through their website.

ella is the most effective type of morning-after pill. It works just as well on day 5 as it does on day 1.

The second option is a pill with levonorgestrel. Brand names include: Plan B One Step, Take Action, My Way, AfterPill, and others.

You can buy these morning-after pills over the counter without a prescription in most drugstores and pharmacies.

These types of morning-after pills work best when you take them within 72 hours (3 days) after unprotected sex, but you can take them up to 5 days after. The sooner you take them, the better they work.

Plan B options haven't been made for people over 155 pounds or more. And ella may work less well if you weigh 195 pounds or more.

Do not use more than one kind of morning-after pill at one time or within 5 days of each other. They may counteract each other and not work at all. Similarly hormone medications may reduce the effectiveness of ella. If you're taking emergency contraception because you made a mistake with your hormonal birth control, Plan B or the copper IUD are better options for you than ella.

The morning-after pill is safe to take repeatedly but is not recommended as the primary birth control method.

Paragard(copper) IUD:

This method is considered the most effective emergency contraception, working 99% of the time. It has to be inserted by a nurse or doctor into your uterus and can stay in the body up to 12 years or until you want it removed. An IUD is known to work no matter what your weight is.

The copper in the Paragard IUD prevents pregnancy by messing with the way sperm moves, so it's hard for sperm to swim well enough to get to an egg.

Hormonal IUD is different from the Paragard and is not an effective option as an emergency contraceptive.

Side effects after getting an IUD usually go away in about 3 – 6 months, once your body gets used to having the IUD in your uterus. Those include:

- Mild to moderate pain when the IUD is put in
- Cramping or backaches for a few days after you get the IUD put in
- Spotting between periods
- Heavier periods and worse menstrual cramps

Both Plan B and the copper IUD are safe while breastfeeding

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/morning-after-pill-emergency-contraception>



Phase Two

Phase two begins about five to seven days before menstruation is due until menstruation begins or is past due. Week two. At this point the egg will have attached to the uterine wall, creating a spongy web of tissue called the chorionic villi, and begin forming a placenta. If menstruation comes at the end of this phase, the little bundle of tissue would pass nearly unnoticed with the blood.

If accessible, you can take an early pregnancy test at this point to confirm pregnancy.

Another way to check for pregnancy is via your cervix.

During most of the menstrual cycle the little donut shaped cervix that leads into the uterus will be about the hardness of a nose and more pink in color. During ovulation the cervix will soften, to about the hardness of lips, and open to allow room for sperm to enter. After ovulation the cervix typically will harden again. In early pregnancy, though, there will be an increase in estrogen and blood flow to the cervix. This will also cause the cervix to soften as well as turn a bluish tint. You can use your finger, inserted in the vagina to feel the texture of the cervix. To check the color, you will want to use a speculum and a light, with either a hand mirror or with another person available to look. The bluish color may not show until phase three, when pregnancy is at least three weeks along.

With this technique, it is important to be familiar with your body and be in a habit of checking the cycles of your cervix before needing to check for a pregnancy. Our bodies are not uniform and can cycle a little differently. For some people the cervix will become a bluish color at the start of menstruation regardless of

pregnancy. Knowing what is normal for your body is key to using natural systems to determine pregnancy.

OPTIONS FOR PHASE 2:

1. Continuing with Herbs: Herbal Abortion Part One
2. Menstrual Extraction
3. Wait for Phase Three

Herbal Abortion Part One

When continuing with herbs, you will want to continue taking herbs from Phase One to disrupt the development of the fertilized egg. At this point you will also want to add herbs that are uterine stimulating and herbs that help cause uterine contractions. This is an ideal time to use herbs to stimulate the uterus because it is the time your body is accustomed to bleeding. We can focus during this phase on herbs that are less toxic but still contain the properties we want to focus on.

Do not use stimulating and contracting herbs when:

You bleed heavily during a normal period and are anemic

If you have a blood clotting disorder

If you are on blood thinning medications

If you have estrogen dependent cancers

You have endometriosis or fibroids

*Watch blood sugar levels closely if you have diabetes

*Thujone is a common teratogen found in herbs used to end pregnancy. Teratogens are substances that cause the growth of abnormal structures in the embryo. Teratogens in a person's system during the first two weeks of pregnancy usually cause the pregnancy to terminate. If pregnancy continues after exposure to these substances, they may have damaged the embryo causing birth defects or other unknown complications during pregnancy. It is very important when using herbs containing these substances to commit and follow through with termination of the pregnancy. Thujone can cause stress to the kidneys and liver, so be careful when using and be sure to include liver and kidney repair herbs during and after this process. Repair herbs will be discussed more in phase five. Thujone can also cause seizures in people predisposed with epilepsy.

Length of Dosage: When taking the herbs listed below for Phase Two, you will take them for 5-7 days until the first day of your missed period. At that point you will move onto Phase Three.

Stimulating herbs: bring blood to the uterus, strengthens contractions, and encourage bleeding

Note: Never use the essential oil of these herbs internally, they are highly toxic.

Ginger root: *Zingiber officinale*

Helps guide other herbs to the uterus.

Decoction: Add 1 tbsp to other recipes

Tincture: 5-10 drops 3-6 times daily

Yarrow: *Achillea millefolium*

Use yarrow in combination with other herbs

Infusion: (can be decocted if other herbs being decocted) 4-6 tablespoons per quart steeped

Tincture: 2-4 ml/ .5-1 tsp/ 40-80 drops 4 times a day

Angelica: *Angelica archangelica, sinensis, and other local species can be used*

Uterine stimulant that encourage contractions use as a decoction or tincture. Has Oxytocic properties.

Decoction: 2 tbsp in a quart of water simmered 30 minutes, drink throughout day

Tincture: 2 ml/ .5 tsp/ 40 drops every two hours

Symptoms of toxicity: Dizziness, headaches, stomach pain, nausea

Black cohosh *Actaea racemosa*-

Prepares cervix to release the contents of the uterus.

A side effect of taking black cohosh is a frontal lobe headache.

People prone to headaches should try one drop of the tincture or sip of tea before taking full dosage. Headache remedies might need to be used in conjunction with black cohosh.

Decoction: 3 tablespoons per in a quart of water simmered for 30 minutes. Drink throughout the day

Tincture: 2 ml/ .5 tsp/ 40 drops every 2 hours

Contraindications: contain Estrogenic Properties

Contracting herbs: cause the smooth muscles of the uterus to contract to expel the contents.

Mugwort: Artemisia vulgaris

contains thujone uterine contracting

Infusion: 1 tablespoon per quart, cover while steeping 30 min. Drink throughout the day

Tincture: 2 ml/ .5 tsp/ 40 drops every 2 hours

Contraindications: prolonged use can damage the nervous system

Juniper: Juniperus communis

contains thujone and rutin, implantation inhibiting, uterine contracting

Ripe berries and leaves are used. The unripe but full grown berries have a higher volume of the essential oil. So adjust dosage as needed.

Infusion: 1-2 tbsp in quart of water, steeped for 10-20 minutes. Drink throughout the day.

Tincture 1 ml/ ¼ tsp/ 20 drops taken 2-3 times daily.

Marijuana: Cannabis sativa or other species

oxytocic properties

Infusion: 2 tablespoons of aerial parts steep in a quart mixture of water and milk (cow or plant) covered, 30 minutes. Drank throughout the day

Tincture: 2 ml/ .5 tsp/ 40 drops every 2 hours

Ingesting: 10-30 mg per day

Regular side effects of Marijuana: altered mental state (could be positive or negative depending on how your body reacts to it), sleepiness, hunger, loss of motor function.

If tolerance isn't built up to dosage already, may cause nausea, dizziness, lack of coordination, rapid heart rate

Blue cohosh: *Caulophyllum thalictroides* -

Oxytocin and caulosaponin, both producing contractions

Properties best extracted in alcohol/tincture form

Decoction: 3 tablespoons per quart, simmered 30 minutes drank throughout the day

Tincture: 2 ml/ .5 tsp/ 2 dropperfuls every 2 hours

Contraindications: contain estrogenic properties, narrows arteries, don't use if you have high or low blood pressure, are at risk of heart disease or stroke. Binds to nicotinic receptors and can potentiate nicotine if used in conjunction.

Signs of toxicity: nausea, stomach/intestinal pain, diarrhea, muscle weakness, chest pain, pain in limbs, increased blood pressure, rapid pulse

Sample recipes:

2 Tbsp angelica root and 2 Tbsp mugwort leaf seeped for at least 30 minutes in 1 quart of hot water and drank throughout the day. Continue for up to five days or until bleeding begins.

$\frac{1}{4}$ part Ginger, 2 parts angelica, 1 part juniper, 1 part blue cohosh decocted for 30 minutes to one hour. Drink 1 quart continuously throughout the day for up to five days or until bleeding begins.



Phase Three

Phase three begins at the point when menstruation is late. A pregnancy test will most likely show up positive (most tests from the store will show pregnancy at about 3 weeks—which is 21 days after last ovulation). Fertilized egg has reached the uterus and has attached itself to the uterine wall, chorionic villi begins to form which provides the initial nourishment, anchoring the pregnancy, and producing the HCG hormone alerting the body of the pregnancy, telling it to increase estrogen and progesterone and also suppresses the immune system.

OPTIONS FOR PHASE THREE:

1. Continue With Stronger Herbs: Herbal Abortion Part Two
2. Skip to Phase Four to explore other non-herbal options
during this time

Herbal Abortion Part Two

Taking herbs to end pregnancy can be very damaging for an embryo if you decide not to follow through with it, leading to birth defects and other potential health issues. When making the decision to take this step you must be willing to complete the

whole process and make sure that you have a backup option should the herbs not work.

When continuing on with herbs, the process now will be similar to phase two, The most ideal time to use herbs is during phase two, right before menstruation is expected. Since that time has passed, now we will focus on stronger herbs to give you a greater chance at success.

The three main herbs that are recommended are Pennyroyal, wild cotton root, and tansy. These three herbs all stimulate menstrual contractions. These are very toxic herbs. You can use them in conjunction with other support herbs but **do not use them in conjunction with each other.**

The potential for toxicity is high with these herbs, so it is important to not exceed the recommended doses and watch closely for signs of toxicity. **Essential oils of abortifacient herbs may be fatal and should never be taken internally.**

Signs of toxicity include: nausea, vomiting, inflammation of stomach lining, dilated pupils, weakened and/or rapid pulse,

convulsions, sweating, numbness in extremities, pain in kidney area, coma, feeling repulsed by the herbs. Trust yourself, if anything isn't feeling right stop taking the herbs.

Each recipe should be used no longer than five days. If menstruation doesn't begin by day five, take a break on day six, then on day seven begin again with the same recipe or a new one.

With these stronger plants, it is easier to have more control over the dose by making a fresh batch every few hours to strain and drink immediately. This avoids allowing too many of the toxic constituents to leech into the tea as well as prevents time for the volatile oils to evaporate.

**Pennyroyal aerial parts: *Hedeoma Pulegioides* (American),
Mentha pulegium (European)**

Causes uterine muscles to contract. Nausea is common with use of pennyroyal. Best drank hot

Tea infusion: 1 tablespoons to 1 cup- steep covered 15 minutes (very important to keep volatile oils from evaporating). Drink Hot every 4 hours

Tincture: 3 ml/3/4 teaspoon every 3-4 hours

Tansy leaves and flowers: *Tanacetum vulgare*

(not to be confused with tansy ragwort, *Senecio jacobace*)

Contains Thujone. Is counteracted by vitamin c. The chemical constituents can vary widely from plant to plant, so be sure to start with a lower dose and slowly work up to test strength. If possible become familiar with a specific bush, to become familiar with the doses it requires. Best used as a simple (with no other herbs).

Tea infusion: 1 tsp to 1 cup of water 3-4 times daily. Drink hot.

Tincture: 1-2 mls/.5 tsp 3-4 times daily

Wild cotton Root: *Gossypium hirsutum*

Tea decoction: 4 tablespoons per quart. Drink 1/2 cup every 2 hours

Tincture: .5 ml/ ¼ teaspoon every hour

I encourage adding ginger to any recipe as it is a great stimulant and works as a carrier for other herbs taken. The variety found in grocery stores works great.

Sample recipe one:

Prepare decoction first of 2 tbsp angelica root with 1-2 tbsp ginger root in a quart of water. You may need to add water to keep the water level at a quart. Pour 1 cup of the decoction, hot, over 1 tbsp of pennyroyal. Cover and steep for 15 minutes then strain and drink. drink 3-4 times a day, remaking the decoction each day, for 5 days or until you start bleeding. It's important that you don't miss a dose. If you do miss a dose, drink a cup as soon as you remember and don't double up on the dosage or amount you take.

Sample recipe two:

Tincture: $\frac{2}{3}$ pennyroyal and $\frac{1}{3}$ blue cohosh. Take 5 mls/2.5 teaspoons every 4 hours for 5 days or until bleeding starts.



Phase Four

Phase four overlaps in time with Phase Three. You would find yourself here either if you tried herbs in Phase Two and Phase Three and found them unsuccessful or if you decided to skip the herbal option to try other methods. A pregnancy test will most likely show up positive (most tests from the store will show pregnancy at about 3 weeks—which is 21 days after last ovulation). Fertilized egg has reached the uterus and has attached itself to

the uterine wall, chorionic villi begins to form which provides the initial nourishment, anchoring the pregnancy, and producing the HCG hormone alerting the body of the pregnancy, telling it to increase estrogen and progesterone and also suppresses the immune system.

OPTIONS FOR PHASE FOUR:

1. Menstrual extraction
2. The abortion pill
3. Clinical abortion

In the next sections we will go over in detail the different aspects to these options. You will learn:

1. How to build, practice and perform menstrual extraction with a del- em kit.
2. Ways for sourcing pills for chemical abortions with directions for using
3. A step by step for setting up and going through with a clinical abortion with help if you are concerned with experiencing difficulty in the process due to gender, race, or immigration status.

How to Menstrual Extraction:

A uterus, when not pregnant, contains only menstrual blood. This blood can be legally removed by a self-help group. If someone is pregnant, the uterus will contain menstrual blood and fetal tissue. The contents of a pregnant uterus can be removed, this time illegally, by the same technique. It is the presence or absence of fetal tissue that decides the legality of the procedure, when accomplished at home or by a self-help group.

Menstrual extraction(M.E.) works by the same method used in a clinic. The two tools available are the MVA: Manual Aspiration Abortion and the Del-em. MVA is used in many clinics still until the 9th-12th week of pregnancy. The Del-em became popular during the times of illegal abortions until Roe Vs. Wade became law and is possible to make at home.

This procedure is ideal from 6-9 weeks pregnant. It is safe until 12 weeks. If M.E. is being attempted after 12 weeks it should be accompanied by misoprostol, to help open the cervix and make expelling the blood easier.

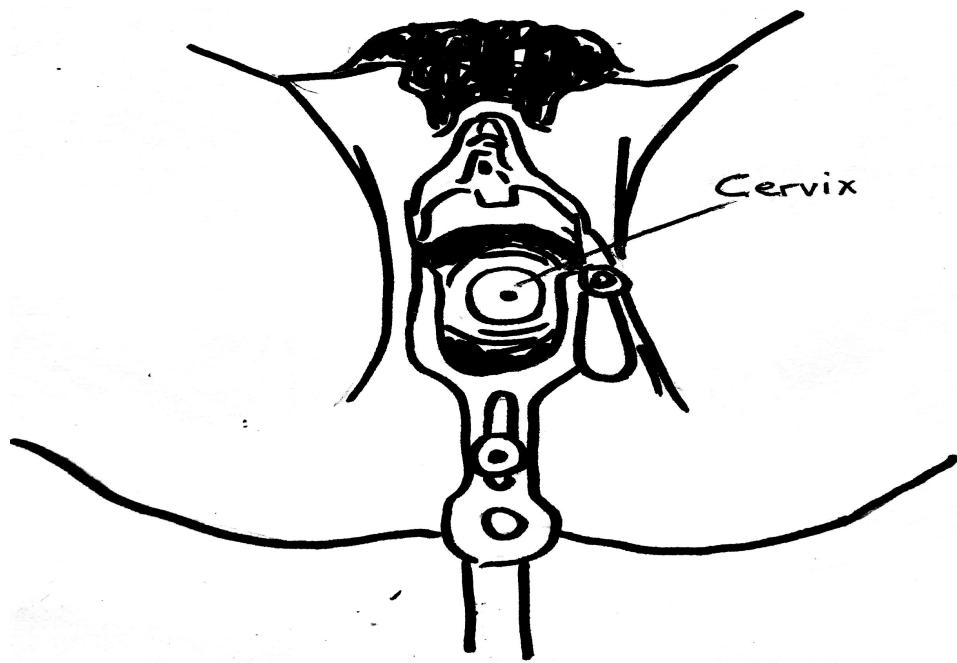
Blue cohosh can be used a couple days leading up to the procedure to help open the cervix. This is particularly useful when you need to dilate larger than 6mm.

Performing the Procedure:

1. You specifically want to sterilize the cannula and the speculum before use, but it would be good to do the other supplies too for precaution (Ring forceps/tongs, gauze and cotton swabs). Much of the material being used is plastic, so heat isn't the best option for sterilizing. You can use 10% bleach solution and soak the items for 15-30 minutes, rinsing after with sterilized water(water kept at a rolling boil for 5 minutes, or buy sterile water from a drugstore). Or you can soak the items in 70% isopropyl for 30 minutes.
2. Person performing the menstrual extraction should wash hands and put on gloves.
3. You should lie back on a low bed or futon and, with your legs spread, get comfortable. You may want someone to hold your legs for you. Definitely have someone by your side to assist you with whatever you might want (water, abdominal massage, Motrin, an extra pillow) during the extraction.

4. Apply a generous dab of lube to a sterile speculum and insert into the vagina. Open the speculum enough to view the cervix. You should feel discomfort and pressure from the speculum, never pinching or pain. If you feel pinching or pain, close the speculum and readjust. Sometimes the size and type of speculum aren't right for the person, if you only have one type of speculum, then you might experience more discomfort during the process. The cervix is the whitish/pink donut shaped organ that is at the back of the vagina. Everyone's tilts a certain direction (forwards or backwards) and the person performing the procedure might have to grab the cervix with a tool (sterile tong, or tenaculum) to be able to view the cervical opening.
5. When the speculum is in place, your cervical opening will be visible by the person who will be holding the cannula. (This is a good time to look for signs that there may already be an infection. If there is an infection it would be good to treat it before trying menstrual extraction). Use the sterile tongs to hold an antiseptic soaked(iodine/betadine) sterile cotton swab to cleanse the cervix. Do this process 2 times to make sure you cleaned the whole area. Although the vagina is not a sterile area, bacteria should never enter the cervix or

uterus or else you run the risk of infection. This helps to reduce the risk of infection.



6. If needed, now you will dilate the cervix to the size of the cannula you will be using. Dilators are sized based on the gestational age in weeks. Sizing:

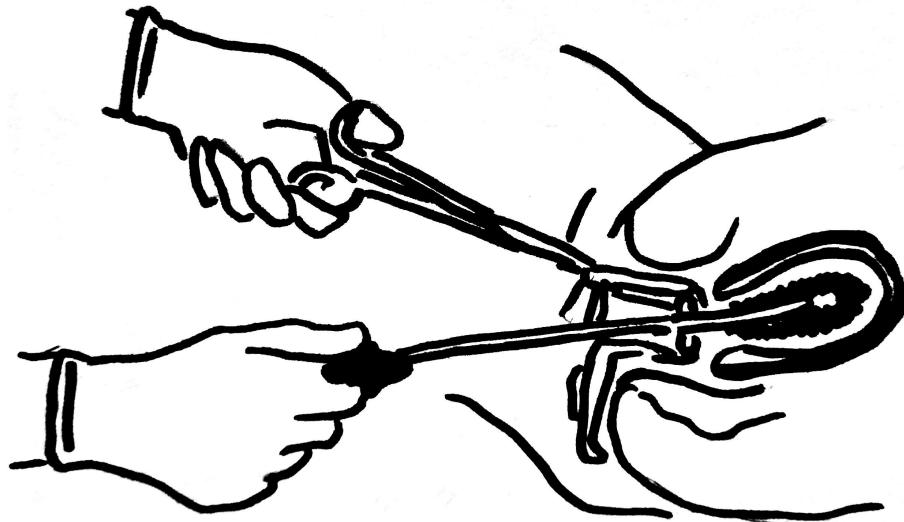
- Denniston – dilate to cannula size (e.g. size 7 for 7 mm cannula)
- Pratt – dilate to cannula size x 3 (e.g. 21 French for 7mm cannula)

Without letting the dilator touch the vaginal walls, gently and gradually move the dilator into the cervical canal. Hold the dilator loosely and allow it to rotate as it moves in. It will feel

snug but smooth. Try to move in a gentle and steady manner as the internal wall of the cervix “gives way”.

If unable to pass through the internal wall try:

- readjusting the tenaculum
- change the angle of dilator
- Switching to a smaller size dilator
- widening speculum blades
- switching speculum sizes to a shorter and wider one



7. Next you will place the cannula. You want to do this as quickly as you can after the dilator is removed. Cannula types:

- Flexible: longer with two openings at tip

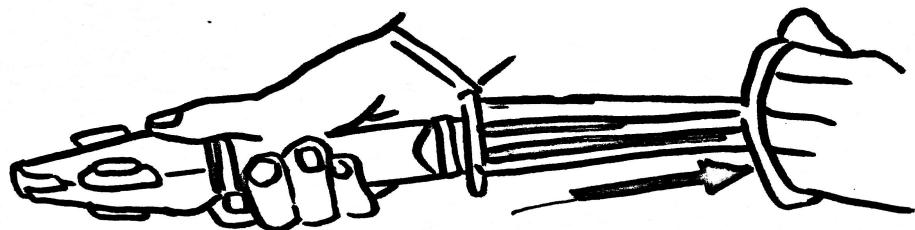
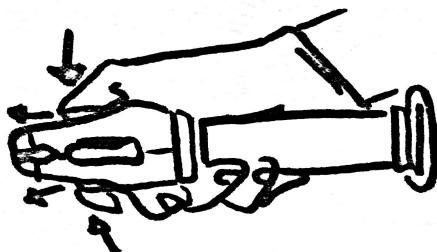
- Rigid: larger single opening at tip
- Larger: faster aspiration, intact tissue
- Smaller: less dilation and resistance

Both the flexible and rigid cannulas are safe and efficient. The cannula is not yet attached to anything. While wearing gloves, touch only the two or so inches furthest from the end of the cannula that will enter the cervix and carefully put the cannula inside the vagina (do not let it touch the vaginal walls either; remember the vagina is not a sterile field) and slowly insert it into the exterior opening of the cervix. A rotating motion as you insert may be helpful.

After you have put the cannula into the opening about 3/4 of an inch, you will begin to feel resistance, as if the cannula will not go any further. You have reached the inner opening of the cervix or the entrance to the uterus. The person may feel cramping at this point because both the cervix and the uterus are muscles. The uterus may also recede into the body making it hard to continue. This is normal as well. Continue to push, with a gentle insistence, until you feel something give and the level of resistance reduces; the cannula has entered the uterus. Gently push it back until it

reaches the back wall of the uterus. This part will be easier if you already went through the process with the dilator.

8. It is time to attach the rest of the aspirator to the cannula. How exactly this part of the process works depends on the tool you are using to create suction for the procedure.



- MVA: For this tool you will start with the valve buttons open and the plunger pushed completely into the barrel. Close the valve by pushing buttons down and forward until locked totally in place. Pull the plunger back until its arms snap outward over the rim at the edge of the barrel, making sure the arms are placed over wide edges of the barrel rim.

Attach the cannula, which is already in place inside the uterus, to the aspirator being sure to not bump the plunger arms as you handle it.

Now you will release the pinch valve, causing the vacuum effect to reach the uterus, through the cannula. Once that is done you will start doing passes: begin to move the MVA in a semi-slow, in and out rotating fashion in the uterus doing a quarter turn each time. Remain in one area until you feel the texture of the uterus go from soft and mushy to hard and ribbed or ridge-like, or like scraping sandpaper. Make quarter turns while moving in and out until a full circle has passed.

Once you have done a full circle/pass, detach the aspirator from the cannula to empty. This may be difficult to do while the cannula is still in the uterus, it is okay to remove it and reinsert as long as it doesn't touch any non-sterile areas. Look for bleeding as you pull out and if there is you may need multiple passes or attempt uterine massage to constrict the cervix. It's normal to need multiple passes.

- Del-em: Create a kink in the tubing that will attach to the cannula and remove all the air from the jar using your one-way valve syringe. Unless you have a one-way valve attached to your syringe, you will need to kink the tubing and detach the syringe every time you need to push the syringe plunger in to create more suction (suction is created as you pull the plunger out). This will provide the right amount of suction needed to detach early first trimester menses and fetal tissue from the uterine wall. Attach the tubing to the cannula and use the same motions as you would for the MVA, an in-out motion until the tissue becomes rough, then rotating to another section of the uterus until you have worked around the whole area.

Working quicker is better, to not draw out the pain. You will see blood and, if you are pregnant, a white, pudding-like substance (fetal tissue) in the tubing. Continue to do this until you no longer feel, through the cannula, any softness in the uterus nor see any blood or fetal tissue in the tubing.

8. When looking for bleeding when pulling the cannula out. You can use a 4x4 piece of sterile gauze, held by the tongs to

press against the cervix to check the bleeding, or to help encourage bleeding to stop and the cervix to close. When you are sure you have done enough passes but bleeding continues you can use uterine massage to encourage the cervix to close. Uterine massage is just pressing down on the lower abdomen and stimulating the uterus to clamp down. Seems like a lot of pressure and people can look uncomfortable. If the bleeding seems normal, remove the speculum. The person should remain lying down for a few minutes before getting dressed to make sure they don't pass out or throw up. If their cramping is severe, apply a heating pad. Give some ginger ale and a small snack. Have the person wear a pad to monitor bleeding- check the pad within the next 20 minutes to make sure they aren't having any excessive bleeding.

9. When finished look at the tissues in the jar. Depending on how far along the pregnancy was you should see a sac, embryo and fetal tissues. See checking the blood section for more details on this. It is normal to have some level of bleeding after and for the miscarriage to continue after the procedure is done.

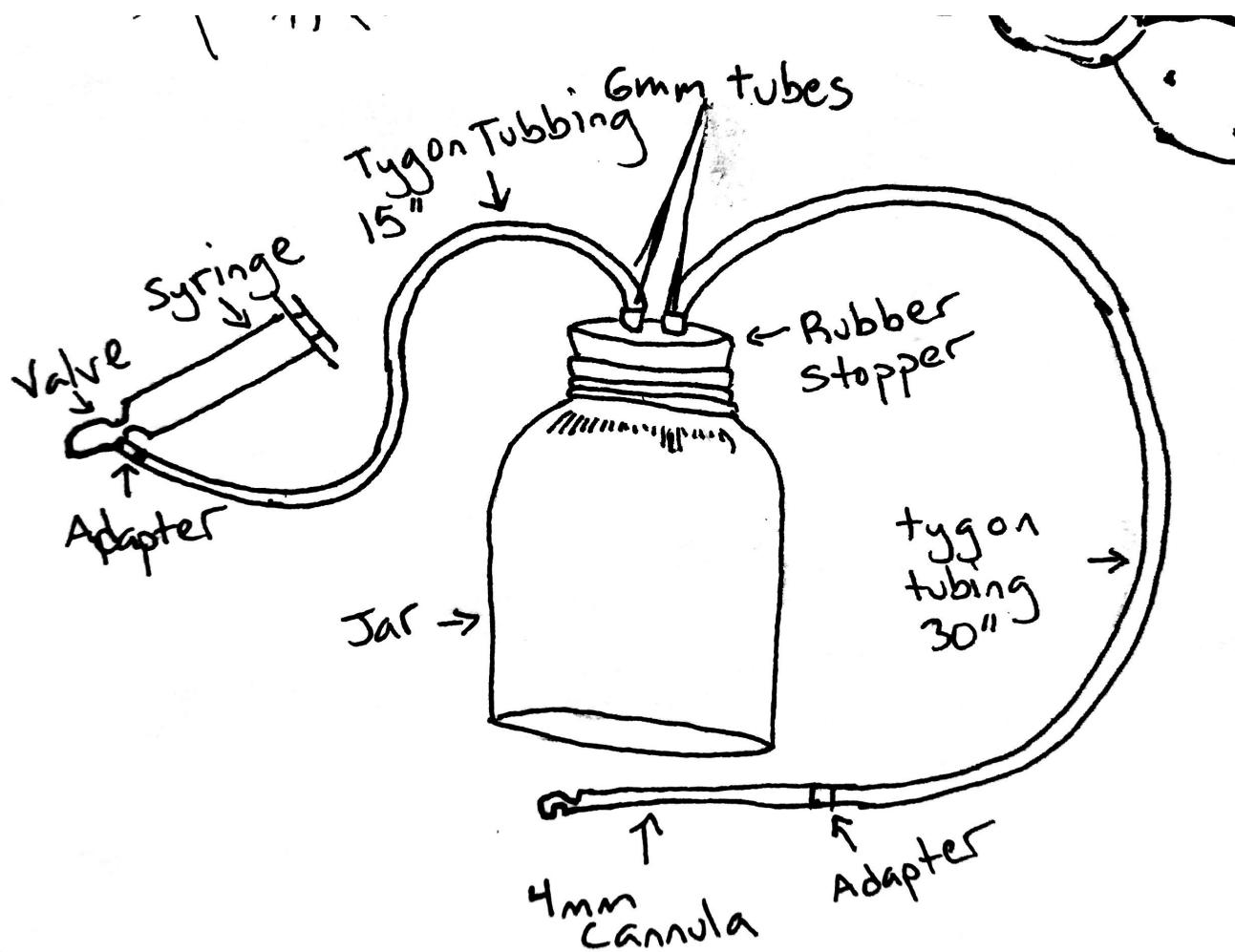
10. The whole process, from the time the speculum goes in to when it is taken out should be between 5-10 minutes.

Practice can be done on ripe papaya or melons to get a feel for using the cannula suctioning.

Constructing a Del-em kit for Menstrual Extraction

You Will Need:

A medium sized jar, rubber stopper, tubing, one way valve, caulk, syringe, cannula, speculum.



Jar:

You can use a mason jar with a metal lid. You will need to be able to drill two holes into the metal lid. Or you can get a rubber sink stopper and find a jar that fits it snuggly.

Caulk:

This will be in the hardware section of stores and is used where the tubing connects to the jar lid. This will make the jar air tight. You will only achieve the correct suction if the device is air tight.

Tubing and the one-way valve:

These can be bought where aquarium supplies are sold. You want enough length in the tubing to move around your body comfortably, without strain, about 2-3 feet for each piece. And the tubing should be 6mm, or wider if you are using a larger cannula size.

Syringe:

You want this to be a larger diameter syringe to limit the number of times you need to repump it. A meat injector with a removable needle should work. You won't need the needle. Syringes used to feed babies and animals don't come with needles but may not have the suction needed to work effectively.

Cannulas:

If you have access to medical cannulas that is great as there are different sizes that are best during specific timelines in the pregnancy. Otherwise you can use the inner tubing in a spray bottle. This tubing will equal a 6mm cannula. The size cannula that is used equals the number of weeks you are into the pregnancy. The 6mm is usable up to 6 weeks. If you are using a cannula that is larger, such as an 8mm, the tubing should be large enough to fit securely on the cannula. Please do not use spray bottles that have, at any point, contained chemicals or detergents.

Speculum:

The speculum is worth not trying to fake and will need to be ordered. You can buy them online on amazon or ebay, or potentially in a medical supply store. Plastic is fine for single use or using on only one person. Metal is nice if you want to reuse it or to be able to re-sterilize it.

Other Supplies That Will Help During the Procedure:

- Valerian or motrin/ibuprofen: give 800 mg ten minutes before, for pain.
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Mirror

- Iodine, hibiclens, betadine: antiseptic for the cervix (do not use iodine with shellfish allergy)
- latex/nitrile gloves
- Pillows
- Sterile Cotton swabs
- Sterile 4x4 gauze
- Ring forceps or metal tongs
- Numbing medication- need to use on both sides of the cervix. If using lidocaine, Read the section Pain Management for details on how to use it.
- Lube- for speculum, when placing.

The Abortion Pill

When you go to a clinic for an abortion, you also have the option of taking the abortion pill. In the clinic you will be given one tablet of Mifepristone. Then you will be given a prescription of Misoprostol to take at home. Mifepristone causes the pregnancy to stop growing while Misoprostol causes contractions forcing the tissues and blood to expel. Mifepristone is generally not available outside of a clinical setting, but abortion through this process is possible without it. Misoprostol can be obtained outside of a clinic.

Resources for How to get Miso Outside of a Clinic:

Mail order from the internet:

<https://abortionondemand.org/> - 20+ US states and growing.

Physician-supported medication abortion care online. Overnight shipping* and comfort treatment included.

www.womenonweb.org- for Mifeprex and Misoprostol in countries with abortion restrictions

www.aidaccess.org -for Mifeprex and Misoprostol in the US

Buying in a Pharmacy: (mostly outside of the USA)

(taken from www.womenonwaves.org which has an interactive map where you can click on any country in the world and find out if you can purchase pills at a pharmacy, the brand names etc)

“Mifeprex is only available in India, China, Nepal and Bangladesh
Misoprostol has more widespread access and can be purchased in pharmacies.

(The following info was taken from womenonwaves.org)

“The brand names for Misoprostol are :

- Cytotec (200µg Misoprostol)
- Cyprostol
- Misotrol.
- Gymiso® - 200µg tablets,
- Prostokos® - 25µg vaginal tablets,
- Vagiprost® - 25µg vaginal tablets

Medicines that contain 200µg Misoprostol are:

- Arthrotec 50 or 75
- Oxaprost 50 or 75

Sometimes it is sold over the counter without a prescription.
Sometimes a prescription is necessary. It is less likely that one would need a prescription for Arthrotec or Oxaprost.

Misoprostol is used to prevent gastric ulcers

Cytotec and Cyprostol and or Misotrol are brand names for Misoprostol.

Arthrotec and Oxaprost contain Misoprostol and a painkiller called Diclofenac. It is used against pain in the joints, or rheuma or arthritis. Arthrotec is generally more expensive than Cytotec.

To obtain one of these medicines, one could for example say that your grandmother has severe rheumatoid arthritis, that she is visiting and she forgot her medicines and is in pain, and that you do not have money to pay for a doctor to get the prescriptions for the tablets or that the doctor is on a holiday.

If there are problems getting the medicine in one pharmacy, try another pharmacy, or send a male friend or partner, as they might have less problems obtaining them. Or, perhaps you can find a doctor willing to prescribe them. Usually one has more luck at the smaller pharmacies that do not belong to a large chain. The person should buy at least 12 pills of 200 mcg Misoprostol. One pill of Cytotec or Arthrotec should contain 200 micrograms of Misoprostol. Look for the dosage of Misoprostol on the package, usually the tablets contain 200 mcg, but other dosages do exist. If the pills do not contain 200 micrograms of Misoprostol, recalculate the number of pills so that the same total amount of Misoprostol will be used."

Contraindications:

Do not take the pills if the first day of your last menstrual period was more than 11 weeks ago, you have an ectopic pregnancy, have an allergy to Mifepristone, Misoprostol, or prostaglandins,

have any of these health conditions: chronic kidney failure, hemorrhagic disorder/diseases, inherited Porphyries.”

To end a pregnancy up to 11 weeks follow these steps: It is recommended that you have someone with you when you take the pills for abortion. Plan in advance how you might seek medical care if needed during the process.

If You Have Both Mifepristone and Misoprostol:

(if you only have misoprostol, skip to the section on taking Misoprostol)

Take one tablet of Mifepristone. This will stop the pregnancy from growing. It is recommended to have a light meal before taking the Mife to decrease chances of nausea and vomiting. If you throw up the medication within 20 minutes of taking it you would need to take another dose. Note the time that you take the pill, as long as you keep it down for 20 minutes you are ok. For people experiencing a lot of nausea and vomiting with their pregnancy, you can take anti-nausea pills about 1 hour before taking the Mife, to help prevent vomiting. Or you can munch fresh ginger root before taking, or if you begin to get nauseous after taking. You can also brew a strong cup of peppermint tea and have it available to drink if you start to feel nauseous.

Misoprostol:

24-48 hours later you take the Misoprostol (Miso will expel the pregnancy from the uterus). You put 4 pills under the tongue or between the cheek and gums (two pills on each side) let the pills dissolve for 30 minutes and swallow anything left behind. You should expect the symptoms to come on within the next 4 hours (cramping, bleeding, flu-like symptoms:nausea, vomiting, diarrhea) and last up to 24 hours.

You can also insert the 4 miso pills into the vagina or rectum, as early as 2 hours and up to 48 hrs after taking the mifeprex . This method tends to have less nausea and vomiting and is ideal if someone is already experiencing a lot of stomach symptoms. Push all four pills into the vagina or rectum as far as a finger can reach and let dissolve there. Symptoms will come on in the next 4 hours and can last up to 24 hours.

If you are 9-11 weeks pregnant, you should take another dose of 4 misoprostol pills 4 hours after the first dose. You should take them the same method as the first time (between the cheeks, under the tongue or inserted into the vagina). Taking this

second set of pills reduces failure rate and also stabilizes some of the symptoms that you might be experiencing from the first set of pills.

If no symptoms present themselves, or you bleed or cramp significantly less than expected (see Checking the Blood section), you can take 2 more tablets of Misoprostol under the tongue or between the cheeks (keeping them there for 30 minutes) every 4 hours up to 5 times total (or a maximum of 12 pills (or 5 doses)). Only take more miso if you haven't experienced symptoms or didn't expel the pregnancy.

If You Only Have Misoprostol Pills:

You need to have 12 pills total. You must take all three doses. Space your doses apart by 4 hours. You take 4 pills at a time using 1 of the 3 methods mentioned above. After 4 hours take another dosage of 4 pills. After another 4 hours take the third dosage of 4 pills. Even if you think you passed the pregnancy you must take the last dosage of pills to try to empty the uterus as much as possible and help to prevent any retained tissue.

Normal Side Effects of the Medicines:

Painful cramping, heavy bleeding including blood clots, flu like symptoms such as: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever. These side effects can last up to 24 hours after your last dose of Miso.

Studies have shown that the best medication for reducing pain with a medical abortion is Ibuprofen and it doesn't interact with the effects of the misoprostol. You can take up to 800mg at a time, not exceeding 3200 mg a day.

You Should go to the Hospital or Clinic if you Experience Any of These Symptoms:

Pain or cramping that doesn't get better with pain medication
Soaking through four or more menstrual pads in 2 hours
Passing large blood clots (the size of a lemon or bigger)for 2 hours
Flu-like symptoms that haven't resolved after 24 hours of taking the misoprostol.

Aftercare:

To prevent infection and be able to monitor bleeding:
Nothing in the vagina for 7 days! (no tampons, menstrual cups, penetrative sex etc)
No submerging in water (taking a bath, swimming etc)-showers are okay!

Follow up:

It is highly recommended that you get an ultrasound 1-2 weeks after taking the pills to guarantee that the abortion completed and there are no remaining pregnancy tissues in the uterus. If you have medicaid you can go to an emergency room and say you think that you had or are having a miscarriage. If you have private insurance, it is usually cheaper to go to an obgyn then the emergency room, but sometimes a long waiting period to get an appointment-try calling the clinic as soon as you know you want to take the pills to see how soon you could get in. If you do not have insurance, check with sliding scale clinics in your area or call a local planned parenthood to see if they offer ultrasound visits. You can just tell the clinics that you think you had a miscarriage. Never go to a place that offers free ultrasounds as they are not real medical facilities and don't give accurate information.

If getting an ultrasound is not an option for you, please read over the checking the blood section before undergoing a pill abortion process.

Take a pregnancy test 30 days after your abortion. This is obviously a long time to wait to see if the pills worked. If you are having no continued pregnancy symptoms, feel like you passed the pregnancy, or also checked your blood for the tissues - then

this method can be a good option and should be done if no other follow up was obtained. Sometimes we think we passed the pregnancy and we didn't!

How to Clinic

Use the internet or call your nearest Planned Parenthood to find abortion clinics in your area. Always make sure you are not going somewhere that is an anti-choice clinic.

Ways to tell if it is an anti-choice clinic:

They offer free ultrasounds

Offer free pregnancy testing but no other medical testing or procedures

Won't tell you anything about the process of getting an abortion

Try to convince you not to get an abortion

Have a name with "choice or crisis pregnancy" in it

Schedule you multiple appointments weeks apart

An abortion clinic will go over their process for scheduling and the state mandated regulations when you talk to them. They will give you prices and can tell you all your options. If you know the date of your last menstrual period, you won't need an ultrasound before scheduling or your appointment.

How to get Around State/Clinic Regulations:

Every state has different laws regulating abortion. Clinics have to go to lengths to be in compliance, often in time and financially consuming ways. Most of these regulations are barriers to people accessing abortion, like 24 hour waiting periods, speaking to the Dr. before coming in etc. and need to be followed by anyone seeking an abortion because there is no way of getting around them as they are documented and controlled by the state. Abortion clinics will be shut down if they are not in compliance. But other regulations, like proof of ID and cost have more flexibility and are sometimes one of the main barriers for people seeking an abortion.

ID:

Most clinics in the US require that you have a government issued photo id-like a driver's license, state Id or Passport (can be from any country). Gun licenses and military Id's are also accepted. Some clinics will accept a picture of your government issued photo id-but you should check with the clinic in advance so you aren't turned away when you try to go in, and if you have other forms of Id like bank or credit cards with your name, a social

security card, birth certificate, school id etc. you should also bring those with the picture of your ID..

If you don't have a government issued photo Id and aren't able to obtain one, you could ask a close friend who looks similar to you if they would be willing to let you use their id. You would have to know by memorization how to accurately spell the name and the date of birth from the id without looking at it while you are at the appointment. You would be able to use your own contact and health information. Make sure the person hasn't been seen at that clinic in the past, and it's important for them to keep in mind that they might have a problem in the future or just be using the same medical record with your visit information. They would also be able to have access to the medical record because they would be able to verify the identity. Most abortion clinics have their own internal medical record system that doesn't become apart of other medical records that you have elsewhere (although this could vary in some states).

\$ Funding, Travel Funding, Medicaid/Medical Assistance:

Cost can be a huge barrier for people trying to obtain an abortion at a clinic. Some clinics do offer assistance with the cost if you ask. In the USA this money comes from private funding

sources, like donations-due to the fact that no federal dollars can go towards abortions and only some states allow state funding. If you are having trouble coming up with the cost, always call the clinic and see if they can work with you, they often want to know that you are trying to come up with an amount, so calling them back and letting them know your progress-or lack of progress can be helpful for them levying more funds. Most clinics want to work with people, but have limited funds and a lot of people in need. There are sometimes separate funds available for travel costs including gas and hotel costs. If travel adds an extra expense for you, let the clinic know and ask about potential assistance. Usually you will be reimbursed at the appointment, so you have to pay out of your pocket first.

Check other states nearby to see if abortion clinics fees are cheaper. Prices for abortions vary state to state due to regulations and availability of assistance programs. Sometimes the cost of travel could be significantly less than the full price of an abortion in your state versus the price in a neighboring state.

If your pregnancy is due to rape, incest or is a threat to your life most state insurance will cover abortion in these

cases. Usually you do not need to have filed a police report. In most states you do have to meet with the abortion doctor in advance to fill out the necessary paperwork and already have insurance through your state. If the pregnancy is a threat to your life, you have to have proof of that from a primary care doctor and usually the abortion would be completed in a hospital setting.

If you are a minor (under 18) and seeking an abortion, laws can vary state to state. Call your local abortion clinic to find out your options. Most states have two options for people under 18: have a parent (who is on your birth certificate) present at the appointment, or to obtain a judicial bypass. If you want to obtain a judicial bypass, the clinic will help you with all the necessary things that you have to do. Some people feel intimidated by the thought of this process, but many minors do judicial bypass successfully and there are feminist law advocates that help with these processes. There is often specific funding for minors seeking judicial bypass.



Checking the Blood

If you are unable to get a follow up after a abortion, it is a good idea to make sure it's complete or has been successful and that there's no retained tissues. This page offers ways to catch and check the tissue.

You can check the blood and clots that you pass for the pregnancy tissues. The pregnancy is very small (at 5-6 weeks around 1/4 inch, at 9 weeks around 1 inch), but should be able to be seen with the naked eye. If you don't have access to an ultrasound after a pill or herbal abortion, checking your blood can be very crucial for your follow up care. The things that you are looking for in the blood are:

The Sac:

This is a thin membrane that surrounds the embryo, opaque/whitish in color between $\frac{1}{3}$ -1 inch long. The sac should look complete and not torn in pieces or missing any chunks, if you find more than one piece, see that they would approximately make a whole one.

The Embryo:

This is the fetus or fetal tissue of the pregnancy, is also white/opaque in color. Depending on how far along you are, you should be able to find the beginning formation of the head, rib cage, spinal column, and four limbs. At five weeks of pregnancy, the whole embryo will look more like a kidney bean than specifically formed parts, at nine weeks it will be more visible. The embryo could still be inside the pregnancy sack when it is expelled from the uterus.

Pregnancy Tissues:

such as menstrual blood and clots, chorionic villi (spider web like tissue that starts forming at implantation that initially provide the pregnancy with nutrients/blood from the uterus), umbilical cord.

Some tips for catching the blood:

Using a menstrual cup (make sure to keep it clean or sterilize by boiling to help prevent infection)

Pee over a strainer to catch anything that might come out during urination or pooing.

Any clots or tissues expelled can be put into a fine mesh strainer and run under cold water to remove blood.

Tissue can be floated in a glass baking dish filled with water to be able to see and differentiate the parts.

Blood and tissues can then be disposed of in a toilet or buried in the ground. Tissues could also be put into a cardboard box and incinerated in a fire.



Positives and Negatives of Each Option

Herbal Method

Positives:

- It could work
- Not as visible as other methods
- You can do it yourself
- The herbs are accessible most places
- It is low cost

Negatives:

- Potentially herd on liver and kidneys
- Person has to be able to maintain a schedule for a few days up to a few weeks
- It might not work
- It can cause a lot of body stress
- It can cause birth defects or complications in pregnancy if it isn't completed
- It takes longer and is more regimented

Clinic Method

Positives:

- Person is under a doctor's care

- Everything is happening in a sterile environment
- Safe and effective
- Support is available

Negatives:

- It cost a lot of money
- May have to interact with social stigmas against abortion
- It can be inaccessible to people with sensitive identities
- person may be uncomfortable with clinic/hospital setting

Menstrual Extraction

Positives:

- Can be done yourself
- It can be done with limited experience
- It is less hard on the body
- A support person is available

Negatives:

- Can't always be done in a sterile environment
- It doesn't always work or may need extra support for expelling
- Might be hard to access the supplies

Abortion Pill Method

Positives:

- Has a high success rate
- Can be done at home
- Mostly takes a day or two to work
- Has a low risk of infection
- It can be taken again if it doesn't work

Negatives:

- It is hard to access
- You need licensing to access it in the United States or have to get through the mail
- It is hard on the body
- It is very uncomfortable/painful
- Might not work (when used in combination with Mifeprex 2-9% failure rate, more if using miso on own-somewhere up to 20% failure rate)
- Can bleed up to 6 weeks
- Get flu like symptoms
- Can be expensive
- Won't be able to do anything for a couple days.

Contraindications

Anemia

Greater risk of hemorrhaging with all methods. Supplement with iron and vitamin C for at least one week before attempting abortion pills or menstrual extraction.

Antacids

Miso: block absorption of misoprostol if taken within 30 minutes of each other. Magnesium containing antacids can also increase diarrhea symptoms.

Bleeding or Clotting Disorders (Von Willebrand's, hemophilia etc.) or if a person is taking blood thinning medications

Highly suggested to be under Dr. Care

Herbal: contraindicated due to high likelihood of hemorrhage

Miso: contraindicated due to high likelihood of hemorrhage

Menstrual Extraction: okay with caution?-Often need DDAVP for surgical procedure and would assume the same for ME.

Diabetes:

Herbal: closely monitor blood sugar levels due to herbs potentially interacting with levels or medications.

Estrogen Dependant Cancers

Herbal: many of the herbs increase estrogen or estrogen receptors and shouldn't be used. These in particular should be avoided: Black Cohosh, Blue Cohosh, Queen anne's lace

History of Seizures

Herbal: Not to use herbs that contain thujone(convulsant)

Miso: rare, but does lower threshold and there are case reports of seizures.

ME: No issues

IUD

If you have a hormonal or non-hormonal IUD and are pregnant, you have to rule out ectopic pregnancy before proceeding with any options for terminating the pregnancy. This has to be done at a medical facility like a dr. office or hospital where they can do ultrasound imaging to find the location of the pregnancy. Do not go to a "free ultrasound clinic" as these are not licensed medical facilities and they often lie to people and try to trick them into not

getting an abortion. IUD should also be removed before attempting any of the abortion procedures.

Kidney Disease

Herbs: Due to extra stress and toxicity put on kidney, it isn't recommended to use herbal remedies

Mifeprex: not recommended with chronic adrenal failure, caution or under dr supervision in kidney disease

Miso: unknown

Menstrual Extraction: Should be okay

Liver Disease (hepatitis, cirrhosis)

If untreated, or currently having symptoms, it isn't recommended to take misoprostol or herbal remedies due to extra stress put onto liver and potential for liver toxicity.

Menstrual Extraction: Should be okay

Nursing Parent

Herbal: because of quantity and toxicity of herbs, it is recommended to pump and dump throughout treatment

Mifeprex/Miso: Ok, but a child might experience diarrhea 2 hours after taking medication.

Menstrual extraction: no issues

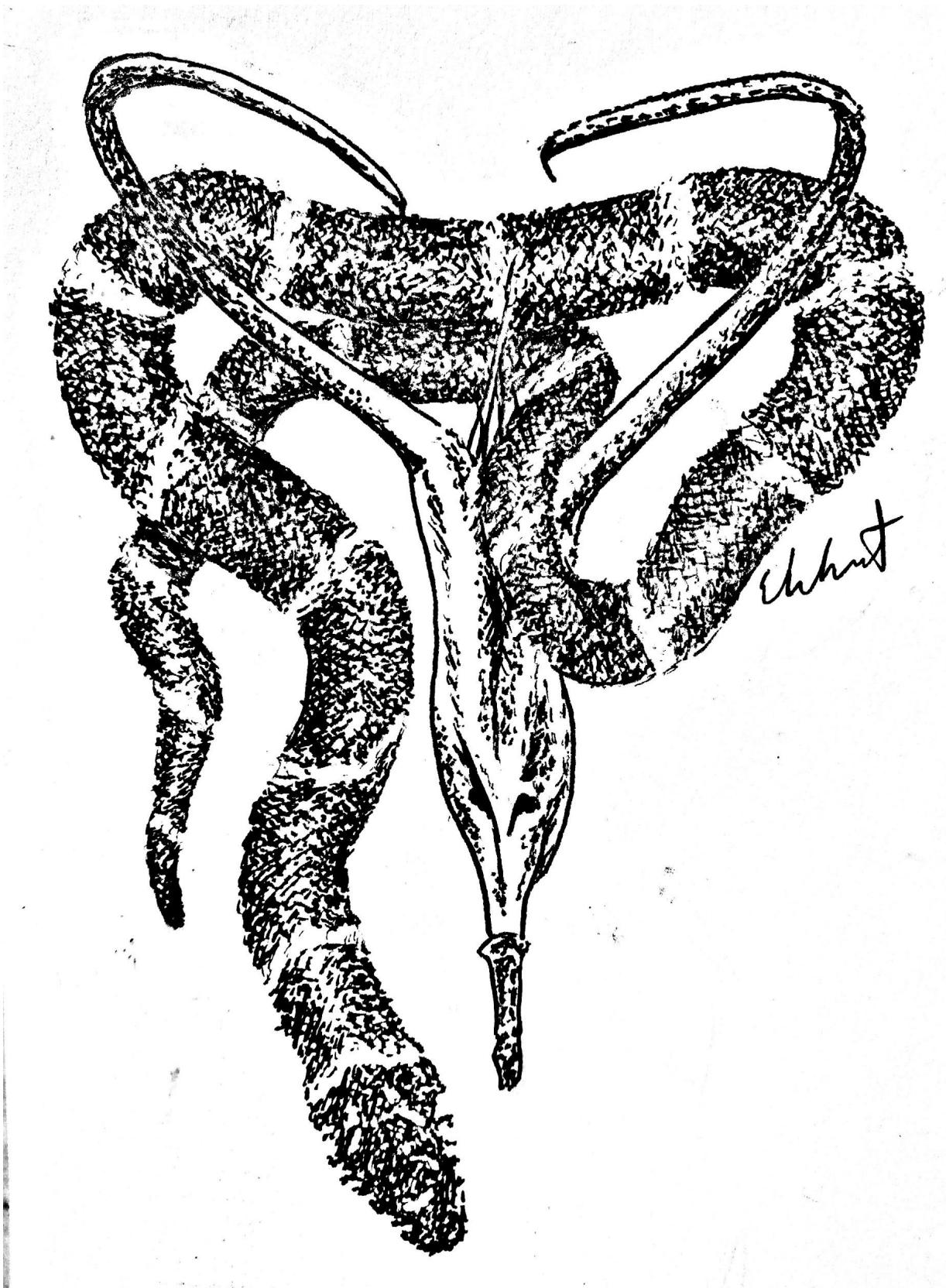
Steroids:

Herbal: Risk unknown

Miso: okay

Mifeprex/Mifepristone: Concurrent or long-term systemic steroid use is a contraindication. Patients taking short-course systemic steroids for acute, non-chronic problem (poison oak rash, sinusitis) must have completed steroid therapy before taking mifeprex. How do steroids affect it?-it's also a steroid, so It doesn't work-they cancel eachother out and can be harmful to the body

Menstrual extraction: Okay



Pain Management

For Menstrual Extraction

Because of discomfort and cramping associated with opening the cervix and emptying the contents of the uterus, it is often desired to minimize pain and side effects associated with ME. Most aspiration abortions performed in the US are performed using a local cervical anesthesia.

Lidocaine:

is the most commonly used numbing agent for local cervical anesthesia.

A sample recipe for preparation of an anesthetic solution (1)

1. Draw off 5 ml from a vial of 1% or .5% Lidocaine
2. Add 5ml of 8.4% sodium bicarbonate to buffer the solution
3. Use approximately 20 ml per patient (do not exceed 20 ml)

Technique

First inject a small amount (2-5 cc) of anesthetic into the lip of the cervix before applying a tenaculum to position and stabilize the cervix for cervical anesthesia.

The most common technique used by providers in north america is a 4-point injection (2 o'clock, 4 o'clock, 8 o'clock and 10 o'clock)

to a depth of less than 3 cm using a maximum of 20 ml of total anesthetic volume. See Figure A (1)

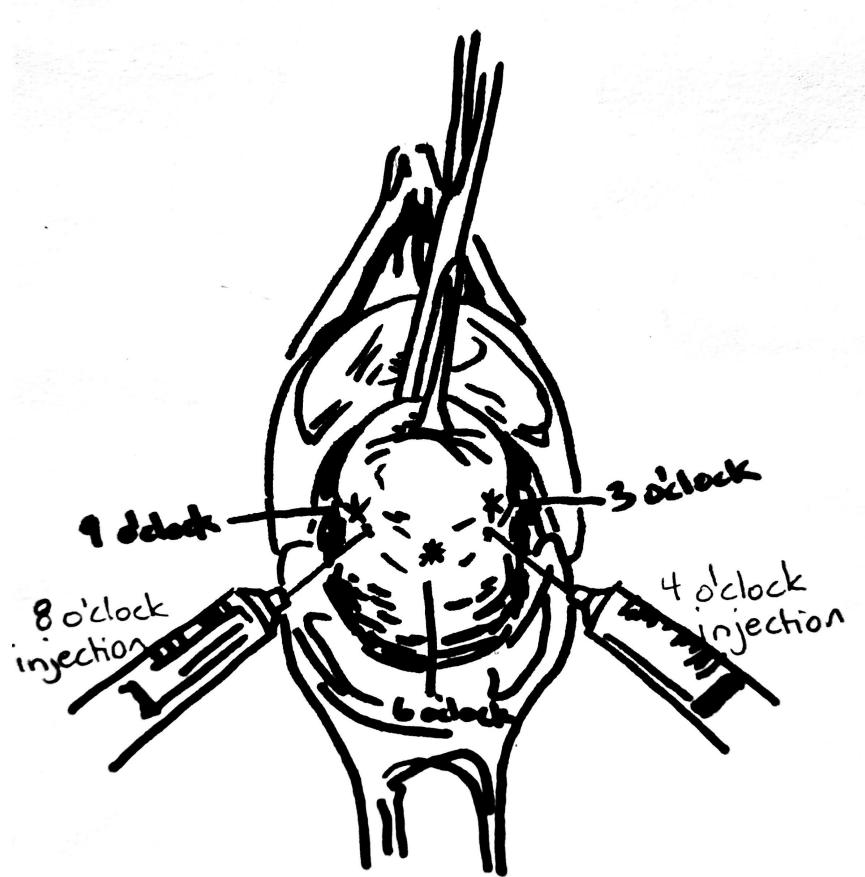


Figure A



Figure B

Figure B illustrates two different techniques for administering lidocaine—directly into the cervix, or in the tissue adjacent the cervix. No significant difference in technique has been documented. The practitioner will experience resistance in injection when administering anesthetic directly into the cervix and little or no resistance when injecting into the tissue lateral to the cervix.

Some side effects from lidocaine injection people will typically experience are: ringing in the ears, a metallic taste in the mouth, and numbing of the mouth and tongue. Higher levels (toxic amounts) will cause confusion, arrhythmia, or slowing of heart rate, convulsions and seizures.

Pre-procedure Medications:

Some over the counter medications can be administered 10-30 minutes before ME to help decrease severity of cramping and discomfort during and after procedure.

Ibuprofen: 600-800 mg (most commonly used)

acetaminophen: 1000 mg (used when person is allergic to Ibuprofen)

Alternative Technique:

Application of Lidocaine gel to the cervix 1 minute before dilation. Study using this method showed that it reduced pain at the end of the suction procedure, not during dilation. Lidocaine gel might be easier to come by and doesn't require being able to administer injections.

Post Procedure Pain Management:

Applying a heating pad to the lower abdomen to reduce cramping for 10-20 minutes

Second dose of Ibuprofen or acetaminophen if needed

Hydration/ Magnesium:

Water is really important for our muscles to work the way they need to. It is important, when preparing for the miscarriage, to stay well hydrated. Magnesium can help as well to tone and keep muscles lubricated.

Herbs to Help Soften and Prepare the Cervix:

Take as a single herb, or in combination three times a day, for 1 to 2 days leading up to the procedure:

Blue Cohosh: *Caulophyllum thalictroides*

Oxytocin and caulosaponin, both producing contractions. Helps to soften and prepare the cervix for labor or miscarriage, helps to ease painful cramps

Properties best extracted in alcohol/tincture form

Decoction: 3 tablespoons per quart, simmered 30 minutes to one hour

Tincture: 2 ml/ .5 tsp/ 2 dropperfuls

Contraindications: contain estrogenic properties, narrows arteries, don't use if you have high or low blood pressure, are at risk of heart disease or stroke. Binds to nicotinic receptors and can potentiate nicotine if used in conjunction.

Signs of toxicity: nausea, stomach/intestinal pain, diarrhea, muscle weakness, chest pain, pain in limbs, increased blood pressure, rapid pulse

Black Cohosh: *Actaea racemosa*

Prepares cervix to release the contents of the uterus.

A side effect of taking black cohosh is a frontal lobe headache.

People prone to headaches should try one drop of the tincture or sip of tea before taking full dosage. Headache remedies might need to be used in conjunction with black cohosh.

Decoction: 3 tablespoons per in a quart of water simmered 30 minutes.

Tincture: 2 ml/ .5 tsp/ 40 drops

Contraindications: contain Estrogenic Properties

Curly Parsley *Petroselinum crispum*

Softens cervix to aide in release of contents of uterus

Use fresh parsley as a pessary - insert around 5-10 sprigs of parsley into the vagina overnight (can be put into panty hose or bundled together with string for easy removal).

Lobelia: *Lobelia inflata*

“Specific relaxing effect of lobelia on a rigid cervical os that is thick, doughy, and unyielding” (Felter, 1983 as cited in Gladstar & Hirsch, 2000) Lobelia promotes normal uterine contraction after the cervical os is dilated, and it relaxes perineal muscles.

Alcohol Tincture or Vinegar: 3-5 drops every 2 hours

Drop dosing directly on Cervix: 3-5 drops before procedure
The easiest method for adding drops onto the cervix may be to add drops onto a sterile q-tip or cotton ball or add the drops to an anti-bacterial tea/wash that then is wiped onto the cervix.

[People can experiment with some of the oxytocin containing herbs that we have mentioned to see if those help to soften the cervix and reduce cramping during these procedures.]

Evening Primrose Oil Capsule:

Helps soften and thin out the cervical tissue. Take 500-1000mg two times a day for three days prior to taking abortion pills, herbs or performing ME.



Herbs for Pain Related to Anxiety

“Factors influencing pain perception include: fewer or no previous pregnancies, history of painful periods, pre-procedure anxiety. Provider experience and shorter procedure time correlate with less pain.” (1) History of trauma.

You can use any of the following herbs alone or in a blend together tailored for you. For use before ME procedure, start taking herbs a few hours before, taking some every hour to help the body and mind stay calm and relaxed.

Skullcap: *Scutellaria lateriflora*

A relaxing herb, good for anxiety and stress felt in the skeletal muscles, helps reduce pain and relax muscles, calming.
Infusion: 2 teaspoons per cup of water, let steep 20 minutes
Tincture: 1-2 mls/ 20-40 drops taken 3-5 times per day or as often as needed

Motherwort: *Leonurus cardiaca*

Used often when anxiety or stress is felt in the chest or heart, or associated with heart palpitations, also when anxiety is

felt as crushing- or coming in from all angles. Soothing for anxiety associated with grief.

Infusion: 1 teaspoon per cup of water, let steep 20 minutes

Tincture: 5-20 drops taken 3-5 times a day or as often as needed

California Poppy: *Eschscholzia californica*

Good for when anxiety shows up as pain or anger in various areas of the body, muscle tension, headache, irritability.

Infusion: 1-2 teaspoons per cup of water, let steep 20 minutes

Tincture: 1-2 mls/20-40 drops 3-5 times a day or as often as needed

Passion Flower: *Passiflora incarnata*

When anxiety is felt strongly in the mind, racing thoughts, self judgement, feeling attacked in many aspects of life, when there is restlessness and inability to sleep.

Infusion: 2 teaspoons per cup of water, let steep 20 minutes

Tincture: 1-2 mls/20-40 drops 3-5 times a day or as often as needed

Kava Kava: *Piper mythisticum*

Good for when anxiety is felt in the muscles, or for a person who feels tightly wound up, when anxiety shows up as social anxiety or makes the person want to isolate.

Decoction: 2 teaspoons per cup of water (better extracted with some fat -½ coconut milk ½ water) cook for 30-40 minutes drink 1-3 cups a day

Tincture: 1-2 mls/20-40 drops 3-5 times a day or as needed

Safety precaution: for short term use only (if taken daily-1 month). Not to be used by people with liver diseases, or in combination with benzodiazepines.

Wood Betony: *Stachys officinalis*

This herb is good for anxiety that is felt mainly in the stomach.

Infusion: 1-2 teaspoons per cup of water, let steep 20 minutes.

Tincture: 1-3 ml/20-60 drops taken 3-5 times daily or as needed.

Bleeding Heart: *Dicentra formosa*

Stops your body's production of adrenaline allowing you to calm and move away from fight or flight mode and to reduce nervous fear. Also a restorative to the nervous system

Tincture (fresh plant): 5-20 drops/ 1 ml taken 3-5 times daily or
Low Dose plant: high doses can shut down the central nervous system making it difficult for the heart to function adequately

Anemone: *Anemone Spp*

Stops your body's production of adrenaline allowing you to calm and move away from fight or flight mode.

Tincture (fresh plant): 5-10 drops taken 3-5 times daily or as needed

Low Dose plant: high doses can shut down the central nervous system making it difficult for the heart to function adequately

Milky Oats: *Avena sativa*

Helps to repair the protective cover of nerve cells offering more tolerance. Good when you feel really worn down and easily irritated.

Decoction: 2-4 Tablespoons in 1 quart water, simmer 30 minutes

Tincture: 1-2 mls/20-40 drops 3-5 times a day or as often as needed

Do I need to get a Rhogam shot?

What is Rh Factor and how does it impact pregnancy?

Rh factor is a protein that the majority of people carry in their blood. Roughly 85 percent of the population is Rh-positive, and Rh status is genetically determined. In first pregnancies, Rh sensitization is rarely a problem because the parent's blood and the developing pregnancy's blood typically do not interact directly until delivery- but if the Rh-positive blood (from the developing pregnancy) enters the Rh-negative parent's blood, the parent's immune system may develop antibodies against Rh factor. If these antibodies then enter an rh-positive bloodstream (like in the developing pregnancy), the antibodies can begin to attack the developing pregnancy's blood, causing jaundice or more severe symptoms if left untreated.

How RhoGam Helps

RhoGAM pre-stocks the pregnant parent's blood with the antibodies to the Rh factor protein, and this prevents the person's immune system from needing to create antibodies to Rh factor in the event of encountering Rh-positive blood. Injecting the antibodies is safer than risking sensitization, because RhoGAM antibodies eventually clear the person's bloodstream,

meaning that if the pregnant parent's blood mixed with the baby's in the future, the parent's immune system would not have learned to create antibodies against Rh factor and the baby would not get anti-Rh antibodies. If a parent's blood is sensitized to Rh factor, the sensitization may be permanent and they risk delivering anti-Rh antibodies to their future pregnancies.

Although it hasn't been proven scientifically that it is totally necessary in a 1st trimester miscarriage, abortion, ectopic pregnancy, or other pregnancy loss, most Dr.'s will administer the shot because it is a low risk shot that could be beneficial (risk is in the 5% range). It's kind of like a "why not" situation. If you are potentially planning to have future pregnancies and your blood type is negative, you might want to check out our source below to consider if you want to get the shot.

"There is minimal evidence that administering Rh immune globulin for first trimester vaginal bleeding prevents maternal sensitization or development of hemolytic disease of the newborn. The practice of administering Rh immune globulin to Rh-negative women with a first trimester spontaneous abortion is based on expert opinion and extrapolation from

experience with fetomaternal hemorrhage in late pregnancy. Its use for first trimester bleeding is not evidence-based.” (womenonweb.org).

If you do want to get the shot, it is imperative that you get it within 72 hrs after taking the pills. You can get it at an emergency room or Dr.’s office that does follow up care for miscarriages. If it has been more than three days since your miscarriage, however, don’t panic. The odds that you have become sensitized against Rh factor are low. Still, it is a good idea to get it within the recommended time span if you can, as it makes the small risk of Rh sensitization even lower. There’s much more evidence on the shot’s necessity after a later pregnancy loss or after giving birth.

If you are concerned, you can ask your doctor about a blood test to check for RH sensitization so that you can set your mind at ease. When you go into the clinic to get the shot. Be sure to use the word miscarriage and do not say you had an abortion.

Herbal Aftercare for all Methods

Potential Complications With All Methods and Possible Ways to Treat Them

*Please note that it is important to have these remedies on hand before attempting to induce a miscarriage so that you can have the remedies ready if needed.

Emotional support Herbs

Hugs: Not an herb but still can be nice

Flower Essences: Mimi Kamp from “Essence of the Desert” has an extensive list of Essences, as does Bach Remedies

See section: Herbs for Pain Related to Anxiety for a list of herbs that can help to soothe the mind and spirit when nerves feel fried or you sense you are reaching the end of your ability to cope.

Post Abortion Talkline: Exhale

A nonjudgemental supportive place to talk about abortion experiences. “Offers nonjudgemental, supportive counseling to individuals with abortion experiences and their partners, friends and allies. We created a confidential space for speaking openly about our abortion experiences free from shame and stigma, outside the political and religious fight on our bodies. ”

Call the Talkline: 866-4-Exhale

Text : 617-749-2948

Exhaleprovoice.org

Heavy bleeding During Abortion

symptom: Soaking through 2 pads an hour for more than 2 hours. Feeling dizzy or light-headed.

Your goal isn't to stop the bleeding all together (although that can be a result of using the herbs) your goal is to bring bleeding back to a normal amount. You might experience that you need to take the herbs at regular intervals to keep bleeding normal. For example, you might have heavy bleeding, take herbs, bleeding slows down or stops and then a few hours later is heavy again. Repeat herbs as needed following the directions below.

Herbal Antihemorrhagic Herbs(herbs that stop bleeding):

Lady's Mantle *Alchemilla vulgaris* and Yarrow *Achillea*

***millefolium*:**

interchangeably or together, internally and externally if needed.

Internally:

Tea: Infusion of 2-3 tablespoons in 8 oz of boiling water, steeped for 20-30 minutes. Drink up to 1 quart in a half hour to decrease/stop bleeding.

Or

Tincture (advance preparation of herb extracted in alcohol): take 4 mls/ 2 tsp/80 drops in a little water every 5 minutes until bleeding decreases or stops.

Shepherd's Purse: (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)

A very common weed across much of the world. It is in the mustard family and native to Europe.

Tea: Infusion of 2-3 tablespoons in 8 oz of boiling water, steeped for 20-30 minutes. Drink up to 1 quart in a half hour to decrease/stop bleeding.

Tincture: used internally, must be made from fresh whole plant Take 1 ml/ ¼ tsp/ 20 drops by mouth. Take every half hour until bleeding subsides.

Yunnan Baiyao: (*Paiyao*)

A Traditional Chinese Medicine used for bleeding disorders and hemorrhaging. Can be bought at most Chinese markets

where herbal remedies are sold. Is available in powder or pills.

The pills are easier to take and work very rapidly.

Oral Administration Dosage

Take 1-2 capsules up to 4 times daily. Take an insurance pill (the red pill) in case of severe hemorrhaging or bleeding.

Externally:

External application might be needed if a person can't take the herbs due to nausea and throwing up. External applications might be less effective, and hard to comply with if a person needs to do repeat applications. Do not reuse sitz bath tea, make fresh tea with each application.

Sitz bath:

Make a strong tea using about 8 tablespoons per quart of boiling water. You probably need at least one gallon total. Let the tea steep for 30 minutes. Sit in a shallow basin of the tea for 20-30 minutes and administer uterine massage.

Uterine massage:

Used mostly in surgical abortions or menstrual extraction

This helps to trigger the muscles to clamp down and slow bleeding. While the person is lying flat on their back, massage the area between the naval and pubic bone, using firm pressure and circular motions.

Incomplete Abortion

This could be just retained tissues or the pregnancy itself still in the uterus

Symptoms: Heavy or persistent bleeding and/or persistent severe pain, pregnancy symptoms don't subside or increase. Positive pregnancy test 30 days after attempt to expel pregnancy. It is important to check the contents (see section Checking the Blood) that are expelled from the uterus if you are unable to obtain an ultrasound after a pill or herbal abortion. How to treat:

If You Used the Abortion Pills:

You should take another round of Misoprostol (4 pills under the tongue or between the cheek and gums) to expel the remaining contents of the uterus.

If You Used Herbs:

Depending on the herbal regimen you followed, you may be able to continue it or restart it to expel the remaining tissues. This

depends on how taxing the first round of herbs were on your body. If possible you might need to follow up with a dose of Misoprostol (see directions above)

In either case you might need follow up care from a clinic if aspiration (suction abortion) is needed to remove the remaining tissues or pregnancy. If you have tried a second attempt and the abortion still doesn't complete, aspiration will be necessary.

Retained tissues can lead to a serious infection or sepsis and should be taken very seriously.

Infection

Symptom: Temperature of 100.4 F/39 C or higher more than 24 hours after taking pills or at any time when taking an herbal regimen.

Pain or cramping that doesn't go away with pain medications
Abnormal discharge from the vagina

Treatment: An infection from an abortion can be very serious and needs to be acted on quickly. In most cases, antibiotics are necessary. If retained tissues are present they need to be removed by aspiration (suction abortion) to prevent sepsis. If you are treating yourself, you need to monitor your symptoms closely.

If you do not notice any decrease in the severity of your symptoms or your symptoms get worse after 24 hours of herbal treatment, you must seek medical attention with a doctor.

Herbal treatment:

Has to be followed very strictly and taken in high doses round the clock.

Immune stimulants:

Echinacea or Spilanthes:

Tincture: take 2mls/ 1 tsp/ 40 drops every 2 hours until all symptoms have subsided.

Tea: make a strong tea and drink it 'round the clock until symptoms have subsided (about 2 quarts per day-2 tablespoons per 8 oz, steeped 30 minutes)

Anti-Infective Herbs:

Usnea

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)- will make you fever, or increase your temperature if you are already feverish

Berberine herb-Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), Oregon Grape Root (*Mahonia aquifolium*), Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*)

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)

*Chaparral (*Larrea tridentata*)*

Andrographis paniculata

*Pau D'Arco (*Tabebuia impetiginosa*)*

*Baical Skullcap (*Scutellaria baicalensis*)*

Blood Moving Herbs:

*Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)*

*Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum sp*)*

*Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)*

Herbs to kill the infection:

A combination of the listed herbs (pick at least 3 from the anti-infective herbs and one blood mover) made into a strong tea (4 tablespoons of herb to 8 oz of water steeped 30 minutes).

Drink 2 cups an hour until symptoms are subsiding, then drink 1 cup every 2 hours until symptoms fully subsided.

Sample Teas:

Yarrow, Pau D'Arco, Barberry, Ginger

Andrographis, Baical Skullcap, Yarrow, Cinnamon

Yarrow, Sage, Chaparral, Rosemary

Usnea, Yarrow, Barberry, Ginger

Bonus Anti-Infectives/Immunostimulants:

Take one or both of these during treatment

Myrrh Resin: (*Commiphora myrrha*)

use tincture 1 dropperful every 2 hours(6 mls a day) or swallow resin whole like a pill- a small piece about 1 per hour(about 3 grams per day).

Garlic: *Allium sp*

(has to be fresh, crushed and uncooked)-eat 4 cloves a day with food

Kidney Support Herbs:

Take one or a combination of these herbs for 1 month following an herbal protocol. Herbal teas are nice for the kidneys rather than using tincture.

Nettle seed: *Urtica dioica*

2 tsp a day chewed or mixed into food

Nettle root:

Tea Decoction: 1 tsp to 1 cup of water decocted 30 minutes. Drink 1-2 cups a day

Mullein root: *Verbascum thapsus*

Tea Decoction: 1 tsp to 1 cup of water decocted 30 minutes. Drink 1-2 cups a day

Corn silk: *Zea mays*

Tea infusion: 1 tablespoon to 1 cup of water steeped 30 minutes. Yum! Drink 1-2 cups a day

Liver Repair

If taking herbs or the abortion pill, your liver may have had a rough few weeks these herbs will help your liver cells to regrow and repair themselves.

Licorice root: *Glycyrrhiza glabra*

Has a long history of use in western and traditional chinese medicine. Can be taken during treatment and after. Studies show that it can prevent damage from taking place as well as heal damage that has already been done. (Contraindicated with Heart disease and High Blood Pressure)

Powder/Tea- 1 teaspoon 1-2 x a day,
Tincture- 2mls/1 tsp/40 drops 1 x a day

Schizandra berry: *Schisandra chinensis*

Can be taken during treatment and after. Studies show that it can prevent damage from taking place as well as heal damage that has already been done.

Powder/tea 1 tsp 1-2 x a day

Tincture 2mls/1 tsp/ 40 drops once a day

Milk Thistle: *Silybum marianum*

Can be taken during treatment and after. Studies show that it can prevent damage from taking place as well as heal damage that has already been done.

Powder-1 tsp 3 x a day

Membrane/ Tissue Repair

Marshmallow: *Althea officinalis*

Repairs mucous membranes in the body, including intestines, lungs and uterus.

Other gooey mallows work similarly(like okra).

For the strongest results steep powder or chopped root in cold water overnight (2 tablespoons/16 oz water), but this can also be made as a hot tea.. Drink throughout the day. The tea can

be mucousy. Just dilute with water until it is palatable. Tea will last one to two days.

Raspberry leaf: *Rubus idaeus*

Uterine tissue tonic, supplies nutrients and is mildly astringent helping to tone the tissues.

Tea- 1 tsp/5 g to 8 oz/230 ml water, pour boiling water over and steep 3-4 hours covered, strain and drink 1-2 cups a day.

Regulating Bleeding After Time Has Passed From the Abortion

After using the pills or an herbal abortion, you can have continuous or irregular bleeding for the next 6 weeks. It can range from period-like bleeding, to heavy bleeding, to just spotting. Sometimes you might pass more clots. The blood is typically more brown in color rather than bright red. This bleeding is due to the lining of the uterus building up to support the pregnancy, just like it does most months in anticipation of a fertilized egg, only there is more blood and tissues that have built up.

Mostly we would just let the body shed the lining how it naturally does. People often get concerned when they have bleeding over a long period of time, or if bleeding reappears

outside of their regular cycle. If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms you should probably follow up with a doctor to make sure your abortion is complete:

Heavy bleeding (bleeding through 4 pads or more in 2 hours)

Excessive Bleeding with cramping or pelvic pain

Fever of 100.2 F/39 C or higher

Passing clots 2-4 weeks after abortion

Pain or cramping that doesn't go away with 800mg of

Ibuprofen

If you are having spotting or irregular bleeding and it's annoying you, and it doesn't include the symptoms described for hemorrhage or incomplete abortion, you can try taking some:

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) or Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla vulgaris*) to help reduce your symptoms.

Tea: 1 tsp/5g per 8oz/230 ml

Tincture: 2ml/1 tsp/40 drops 3 x a day

The Radical History of Cotton Root

Many of the ways that I have been taught as a “western herbalist” have fallen short in giving a full account of how plants have been used, or their historical impacts on society and culture, and there have been huge gaps in crediting where knowledge about plants has come from and how it was attained. I wanted to include more info about cotton because, as a plant, I think that most people see it through the lens of capitalism: a cash crop, one that played a major role in colonial, white European wealth being established during chattel slavery here in the US.

I don’t think most people think of cotton as a mallow family plant, or associate it with the sweet, moistening, big beautifully blossoming mallow family flowers. Cotton isn’t typically presented as a medicinal plant, or sacred plant, or held up in regard as a plant of resistance and self-determination. At one point, cotton might have been the most-used medicinal plant in the US -- and used specifically in resistance to slave masters and colonization.

Various species of cotton are native to many regions of Africa, Central and North America, Caribbean Islands and India, where cotton root bark, seeds and oil all have a history of being used across cultures to help with contraception, birth, miscarriage

and other health issues (Grieve 1930). But its use as an abortifacient as we know today comes from its historical use by enslaved African women* in the Southern US.

In 1807, congress passed a bill abolishing the importation of slaves into the US. “To plantation owners, this meant that future labor would have to be supplied from the offspring of existing slaves. As a result, many masters resorted to ‘breeding’ slaves and establishing breeding plantations.... Enslaved women suffered under the tridimensional oppression of race, class, and gender, which included intimate violence and reproductive exploitation.” (Culpepper 2017)

What a breeding plantation meant was that enslaved females were expected to start bearing children by age 13, to have had 4-5 children by age 20, and as an incentive, were told they’d be granted freedom after producing 15 children. Boys were expected to impregnate 12 females a year, if a boy was underdeveloped (sexually) by age 15, he would be castrated and sold to the market or used for labor. Much of this “breeding” was enforced by armed white slave masters who orchestrated and participated in mass rape. (Simkin 2014)

I want you to read this slowly, swallowing each word and breathing it out to release.

Forced breeding. Sit with that. Really allow yourself to hold the experience of millions of enslaved people who were raped and forced to bear children, who were then often stolen from them. I want you to pause, and feel it in your body, feel all the emotions that come up, all the pain.

All of this horror is not without defiance and resistance by those subjugated. This resistance came in every form: organized rebellions, escape, and small everyday acts like breaking tools, slowing down work, feigning sickness, setting fire to buildings or even poisoning slave masters. On breeding plantations one of the most common resistance tactics was the use of cotton root bark.

Enslaved African women chewed the fresh root bark daily as a form of contraception. If someone did become pregnant the root and seeds were used, boiled into a tea and drank to induce miscarriage. The use of cotton root was so effective, “white doctors, they began to use Viburnum prunifolium (black haw) to stop the contractions of miscarriages already in progress, until

Physician W.W. Durham noticed ‘at one period in my practice, the Negroes used the cotton root so frequently to produce abortion that my supply of black haw became exhausted’. (Schwartz 2006)” (Culpepper 2017)

The use of cotton root was so widespread, Dave Byrd, who lived in slavery prior to Emancipation, recounts “I believe if slavery would have lasted much longer, the Negro race would have depopulated because all the Negro womens, they had become wise to this here cotton root. They would chew that and they would not give birth to a baby. All of their masters sho’ did have to watch them, but sometimes they would slip out at night and get them a lot of cotton roots and bury them under their quarters. If they could just get enough of that root...to do what they wanted it to do.” (Rawick 1972)

How did these women know how to use cotton root? Culpepper writes “knowledge about the cotton plant and the use of cotton root bark dates back to Mandingo women [using] the root of the cotton tree, which grew in parts of Africa, [which] was used as an abortifacient during the first trimester of pregnancy

(Bush 1990)...quite naturally the knowledge of cotton root as a medicine was easily transferred to the cotton fields of the south."

Just like many other plants found or brought here, African women already had knowledge of the plant's uses, and they were able to use the cotton being grown on the plantations in ways unexpected by white slave masters.

Cotton was so effective as an abortifacient amongst enslaved Africans that white herbalists and doctors began to replace the more commonly used *Ergot* (*Claviceps purpurea*) with cotton root. Ergot, a type of fungus that grows on rye, was said to be more dangerous, prolonged use causing a fatal gangrenous disease. Ergot was also hard to process and store, as any over- or under-drying caused chemical changes in the fungus or allowed other molds to form. (Grieve 1930, Sayre 1917). White doctors learned of the use and effectiveness of cotton by being called on to "treat" or "reverse" induced miscarriages by enslaved people. So, on the one hand, they enforced the condemnation of cotton root use by enslaved Africans, and at the same time incorporated the knowledge about cotton root into their pharmacopeia, failing to acknowledge the source of the

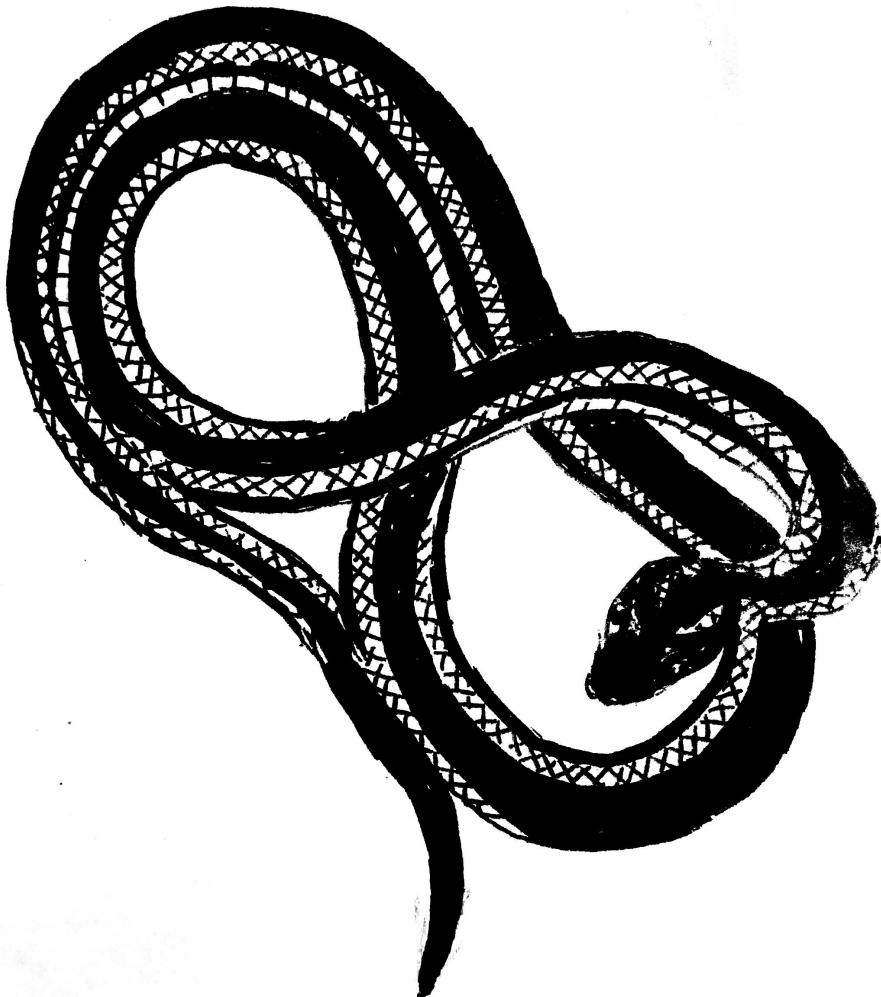
information. White doctors condoned a system that made cotton root available to whites while prohibiting its use by enslaved Africans.

So now take time to sit with cotton, and the strength, knowledge, resilience and power of the African women who held that plant's use and taught others about it. We still have this knowledge today because of them. Feel cotton and its wisdom in your body.

I hope that when people talk about or use cotton root, they will hold space for its history, remembering to sit with the legacy and power of this plant. And I want to express deep gratitude to the work of Karen Culpepper who did extensive research on cotton. In all my scouring of books and the internet, her work was by far the best researched and written. So please support her work! I would encourage everyone to read her complete article on cotton, a beautiful homage to the plant and the people who carried this knowledge.

*The term women is used in this writing to refer to people able to bear children. During the time of colonization and

enslavement, strict gender roles were enforced by colonial/slave powers and gender variance was not well documented. Many people subjected to forced reproduction might have been transgender, non-binary or other gender variant. I choose to use the word women (rather than people or other neutral term) to honor the legacy of black women (cis and trans) and their continued role as active resisters and leaders in the fight for liberation globally.



Personal Stories

One:

The first time I got pregnant I was 18. I had just recently become politicized around women's health, and while in the past I had been super paranoid about getting pregnant because I didn't think I could ever have an abortion (I started taking the pill about a year before I even had sex), after politicization, I stopped being very careful. I had read a bit about herbal abortion, and fully believed that herbs could terminate a pregnancy and that herbs were a good back-up plan. When I found out I was pregnant, I was traveling, and it was very stressful trying to find the herbs in the rural area I was. I also didn't have my zines with the herbal recipes.

A friend of mine however had Self-ritual for invoking release of spirit life in the womb by Deborah Main and so I followed the herbal part of her recipe – 10 tincture drops each black and blue cohosh every 2 hours and 10 drops rue tincture every 6 hours. I didn't do the rituals she laid out because I didn't believe in ritual. I didn't start to bleed. I tried some visualizations, tried hot baths, increased the dosage, started to feel like I was a complete failure – like I wasn't connected enough to my body to make this work. I had really bad morning sickness (something I experienced every pregnancy since). I'm not really sure if the herbs made me any sicker, but they didn't work. I ended up getting an abortion

at a clinic – this was before clinics had the type of insane regulations they have now. The clinic I went to was in a house that was converted to a clinic. There were families and kids playing with toys in the waiting room. It was normalized in a way that was such a huge relief.

In my 20's I got pregnant two more times. I tried herbs. The information I had at this point recommended way higher dosages than I had tried when I was 18. I can't find the recipe, but I remember drinking a LOT of tea, very hot penny-royal, I think the Cohoshes again, Tansy and Rue, megadosing Vit. C. I can't remember but I felt awful. Again it didn't work. Again I felt like I was a failure. First I was a failure because I got pregnant, and then again because I couldn't get the herbs to work. I had so-so experiences at the clinics. The first one was covered by Medicaid (I had to apply for medicaid as the unborn child! But at least it was still covered then in some states), the second was expensive and I had to borrow a lot of money and it was difficult to pay it back.

I wanted to learn to do menstrual extraction. It seemed like a safer and more effective way to take our health back into our own hands. In my early 30's I got involved with a group of people who formed to learn about reproductive health. Everyone had different ideas of what the focus should be, and we spent a few months learning about the menstrual cycle, nutrition, alternative healing, etc. Eventually everyone left the group except for four people who wanted to learn menstrual

extraction. We didn't have any idea how we would learn it, but started where we could.

We met weekly, and practiced speculum exams on each other. We had a nurse come and teach us how to do pelvic exams. We discussed policies – like would we except cis-male partners or support people in the room, what would our security protocol look like, etc. We met like this for about a year, and presented workshops on various topics – self-defense, the menstrual cycle, natural fertility awareness, etc.

Eventually we were invited to a gathering of other health groups where there was a midwife who did menstrual extraction. She taught us the basic procedure, and we received a one-way bypass valve, sounds, and cannulas. We did not feel even vaguely ready to start doing menstrual extractions to end pregnancies, but started practicing on each other during our periods. One of our members would typically go into shock when the cannula went through her os, so that was scary but good to have the experience of dealing with.

We met another group who had been doing menstrual extraction for many years, and had a more rigorous approach to the procedure than the midwife had. We studied with them for a weekend, and felt much more prepared. They shared with us their emergency procedures and other really useful documents.

Eventually we started performing menstrual extractions on friends

who got pregnant. Some went very smoothly, some were very difficult or unsuccessful. Because we didn't have access to lidocaine (a injectable numbing agent) we could not dilate the os and so could only do very early pregnancies. The menstrual extractions we tried that were over six weeks from the last menstrual period were unsuccessful – or led to miscarriage or hemorrhage a few days after the procedure. We were able to deal successfully with hemorrhage with herbs which was amazing, but overall, I believe fairly traumatizing for the person. Logistically, providing menstrual extraction was very taxing. When someone would reach out to us, we usually had just a couple days to try and get everything in order – meet with them, go over the risks, other options, and pre-care – get a place cleaned and set up – rearrange our schedules – meet with their support person – confidentiality talks. The post-care was difficult to follow up with.

There are things that were really empowering about menstrual extraction. Being in a committed group for a handful of years that met regularly and worked on all the emotions that arose when we discussed our bodies, and the powerful emotions that come up when we allow our bodies to be present together was amazing. Being able to do free or low cost pregnancy terminations in the comfort of people's homes was great. Being able to facilitate a person moving through the experience of pregnancy termination with care and support and allow them to really

explore and honor whatever emotions were or were not connected with it was transformational. Taking back control of this basic human right was amazing. I think some people had really empowering experiences when we worked with them – and went on to become more involved in political work.

I have mixed feelings about the time I spent working on menstrual extraction. I think it is absolutely essential knowledge that we must hold on to and pass on. I also think it is very limited in the scope of who it can reach and who it can help. I think if people want to learn to do menstrual extraction, they should be very serious, form a group, start to learn to be really present and proficient at exams, learn to support each other, and decide how they would support both each other and the people they are helping before, during and after the menstrual extraction. I think the support is probably the most important part of the offering, and would like to see groups form to provide support to people going through medical abortions.

Two:

I took the abortion pill a couple years ago, when I was about six weeks pregnant. I did it at my apartment. I set a timer for a half hour after putting the pills in my cheeks and suddenly KNEW it

was about to happen about 30 seconds before the alarm went off. The timing was SO exact.

My instinct was to take the pill instead of getting a surgical procedure because it seemed more low-key somehow. Like because I wasn't having an actual surgical procedure it would feel less invasive. I was wrong! One thing I wish I had really understood beforehand is that instead of a medical provider physically removing the fetal tissue, your body spontaneously forces it out of you. It's not less invasive, it's just something that suddenly starts happening inside you, which was a very creepy and scary feeling. The doctor said to go to an emergency room if anything felt "wrong", which was basically impossible to gauge as a person who had never had an abortion before and didn't know what level of pain indicated danger.

It was the second-worst pain I have ever experienced in my life, right behind pinching my sciatic nerve. It lasted about 45 minutes at its most acute, but time during an abortion is intensely relative. My doctor had given me an extra strength naproxen, but no actual painkillers. Lying down in a warm shower was the only thing that made it bearable. The pain aspect, and the hormonal-emotional aspects are really downplayed in a lot of the information available online, which is likely a result of

stigma/pressure to not seem inhumane, and also so as to not scare folks out of getting them just because the pain really is that bad and you likely are going to be deeply depressed and hormonal for a while after. It was a Cronenberg nightmare, but also incredibly straightforward; the only thing to do is let it happen and sleep it off. Take oxys, take xanax, don't feel bad about it. I was not prepared on account of not fully understanding what my body was going to go through, and that made my experience more difficult than it had to be.

I bled for a month straight afterward, but also kept riding my bike and started having sex before I was actually healed. I'm a sex worker, so I couldn't really take off all the time I needed, which made overall healing take longer. I got a cervical infection, which was gross and technically preventable. I also went into one of the deepest depressions of my entire life. I was despondent. I was in so much grief, but also totally without regret, which was a confusing way to feel. I'm also trans, so there was an ultra nihilistic dysphoria aspect to it all, and a near-total absence of people for me to talk to who understood that element.

I have absolutely no regrets about getting the abortion, and I still would not consider any other option if I could do it over, or ever need to again. My only real regret is not getting a surgical

abortion and getting my tubes tied at the same time. I should have had painkillers and anxiety meds on hands and it was cruel for my doctor to not provide them. That said, my Medicaid insurance covered 100% of the cost, which would have been about \$600, and everyone working at the clinic was great (although I played cis -- no idea how things would have gone if I showed up in my usual gender presentation or asked to be called a different name).

All in all, it was successful. The only advantage of the pill abortion is that you can collect it in a jar and keep it, if that's your thing.

Three:

I got pregnant for the first time on a mountain top in oregon, my girlfriend at the time like literally fell asleep while we were fucking, she had just cum inside me. I lay there awake, feeling the magic of that mountain, and a vivid presence next to me, that moved with the wind into my body. Everything around was still, yet stirring, quiet, and loud. Stars speckled above, the smell of the air crisp and cold. Trees creaking in the way they do, crickets, katydids, and other critters chorused around me. I don't know how or why, but I knew immediately I was pregnant. I don't know if it was the presence- that so clearly joined us, or just the deep dread

that pregnancy could be the outcome. I woke the next morning and quickly pushed those moments away from me-leaving them on that mountain-ignoring what my body had told me, the trees, the wind, the stars.

I didn't face it again for another six weeks, once my period was late-and the fucking sickness had settled in. At this point I was on the other side of the country, at the RNC protests in NYC-2nd Bush, 2nd term. But I was barely at the protests, too tired and nauseous, I watched most of it on cspan, from the 14th floor of a nyc apartment. Pissing on a pregnancy test, the positive line showed immediately. From the moment I knew I was pregnant (on that mountain top) I knew I didn't want to be.

At the time I knew a little about herbs. I had used them for menstrual cramps, colds and flus etc. I had learned from library books (the internet wasn't like it is now) and zines. I knew I needed an abortion, and even though I was very familiar with abortion clinics (having been an escort for a few years) I was honestly scared to get one. I had never had a pelvic or gynecological exam, due to no insurance and a history of sexual trauma-It was something I had avoided. The thought of an "invasive" surgery was triggering. And the pills at that time still had a lot of misinformation and warnings. So I wanted to use

herbs. I dug out my trusty Hotpants, I had used it for advice on cramps and other things and had so far been a great resource. But there's not much instruction in that zine. Just a list of herbs-categorically, like abortifacients, emmenagogues etc. I got some of the herbs. I made a strong tea- i think I drank like a quart. I felt sick. Nothing happened. I called the abortion clinic the following monday.

When I called to schedule my appointment-I wasn't able to say "I need an abortion"- I was surprised how much shame I felt even though an abortion was the only thing I wanted and I was pro-abortion and never wanted to have kids. It was probably the first time I really experienced how much I had internalized the stigma our culture has surrounding abortion, and being in my early 20's hadn't done much work around unlearning or having awareness of the unconscious bias I was subjecting myself to.

My experience at the clinic was really sweet. I was so scared. My partner came with me. There was a wall of protesters outside who all knew me from being an escort. Everyone at the clinic was very nice and supportive. The procedure was incredibly painful, but lasted like 4 minutes. The person in the room held my hand and talked me through everything. I puked my brains out afterwards, but was surprised when I sat up on the table and felt

immediately not pregnant! I was so relieved. They took me to the recovery room, and I honestly can't remember if I still had cramps or not. The recovery room was a semicircle of reclining chairs. There were a few other people already in there and more brought in while I waited my 30 minutes to make sure everything was normal. To me, that was the most empowered I have ever felt. To be in a room, full of people who just all had an abortion-knowing what it had felt like to have been pregnant, not wanting to be pregnant - and now, kinda magically not pregnant-felt fucking incredible. There were so many emotions and reactions. Some people were happy and almost dancing in their chairs. Some were clearly sad and going through a mourning process. I looked around and I felt the collective power there, and my heart poured over. I remember leaving the clinic and my partner purposely trying to run over the protesters while I flipped them off. We went to the library to get some dvd movies. I fell asleep in the car, and only woke up to move to the couch and sleep the rest of the day.

I feel so grateful for everyone in the past, present and future who fought, or continue to, so I could not be pregnant when I was and didn't want to be.

I started studying herbs more formally in 2006 a few years later-not cause I wanted to be an herbalist, but because I wanted

to do something for myself. As a community organizer and activist- I had been putting all my energy into other people, projects and causes and I wasn't putting anything into myself. Who knew I'd be where I'm at today from that small decision. But after the first weekend of classes I was like-I want this to be my life!

It wasn't until the second program that I took that the teacher gave a class on herbal abortions. It felt like an intense class, hearing the teachers experience, warnings and seriousness of sharing the knowledge. I came away from it thinking- wow, I messed around with those herbs not knowing shit and also-of course It didn't work for me-the amount I took was like nothing compared to the dosages you need to poison yourself enough to end a pregnancy. And that's honestly what that class taught me. That you are taking herbs that are completely toxic to the liver and kidneys (and therefore the developing pregnancy) in a dosage that is poisonous and could kill you and causes birth defects to a developing embryo if it survives (and it often does). Yes you are also taking herbs that contract the uterus and help to expel the pregnancy, but those herbs won't work on their own, if they did we'd be in an easier position. The class taught me that if you're gonna use herbs, you gotta have a plan for going to a clinic if they

don't work. And it taught me that not only is it very dangerous, but it's really, really rare that it works. And my experiences with herbal abortions after that confirmed those lessons.

Becoming an herbalist, opens the door to people contacting you about herbal abortions-people come to you for it. Mainly for the same reason I sought it- I wanted to avoid an invasive surgery, other people see it as more natural, they think it's possibly safer, and also it's cheaper and potentially more accessible. So I worked with people using the information from that class. Each time, the herbs didn't work and the person just got really fucking sick. It was scary. I knew I needed to learn more- so I sought out more classes and talked with other herbalists and midwives. I researched. And I started working at an abortion clinic.

Of course through it all, I learned that a surgical abortion is the quickest, safest way to end a pregnancy. And although it is "invasive" in the sense that some doctor is all up in your junk, it's not cutting into the body or doing anything that really needs any healing afterwards. The dr goes in through the natural opening to the uterus and scrapes/sucks out the lining (what is normally shed during a menstrual period) and the pregnancy tissues. The uterus clamps down (cramping), shrinking to its normal size (also a

natural process part of birth and menstruation). And that's it. Yeah it's fucking painful. But you don't damage your vital organs, you're not cramping and puking for 24 hrs (like can happen with the pills). And you don't bleed for the next 6 weeks shedding the lining that built up while you were pregnant. Also, people who work at abortion clinics are bad asses and really care about you (not to say that everyone has a great experience at abortion clinics-but that it's less scary than most of us think). And I also learned that there are safer, more effective ways of using herbs and that information isn't readily out there.

So that brings us to this zine. I wanted to put everything I've been learning (or at least a good chunk of it) into some sort of useful guide. Part of me feels some urgency with it, now that the supreme court is made up of enough people to overturn Roe. But also, abortion pills are becoming more accessible and spreading that information more also feels important, because honestly abortions are really expensive and cost is probably the biggest deterrent second from accessing clinics.

I also hoped to get stories out there from people who have accessed abortion outside of a clinic setting, whether they tried herbs, menstrual extraction or sourcing pills from outside the country. There are so many people out there experimenting and

also keeping the knowledge alive. People don't talk about it a lot, but so many of us have abortions, or pregnancy scares, and many have tried herbs. And a good number of people try other dangerous things like bleach or other chemicals, or getting really fucked up on drugs. So I reached out to a friend who I know has as much interest and knowledge and we started working on it. I hope that it will grow with more stories and personal experiences.

The short of the herbal info is this, using herbs to prevent implantation of a fertilized egg is your number one goal, and using herbs to bring on menstruation before and when you are supposed to get your period is gonna have a much higher success rate and is much safer. This means that using herbs starts at the "whoops" moment or during ovulation and continues until you get your period. I strongly believe that people should not use herbs once they are pregnant enough that it's showing up in a pregnancy test. I honestly think that it's too late (the herbs often won't work) and too dangerous a process at that point. And this is the reason why I think that herbs didn't work for me or people that I had worked with- they came to me once they knew they were pregnant, which is usually after they miss their period-putting them at 5-6 weeks pregnant. In my opinion the pregnancy is too established at that point to fuck with herbs.

Four:

Fifteen years ago I gave myself an herbal abortion. My life was in turmoil. I had just moved all the way across the country from all of my friends and family. I was living in a city for the first time. I was in culture shock. I had no friends, and no job. I had \$3,000 to my name which was rapidly disappearing and I was apartment-sitting for someone I had known back in college while he was out of town for three months. This was the time-frame in which the plan was to land a job and a place. As life would have it along the way I fell in love, and immediately got pregnant. Which was incredibly painful because part of what was stirring in my soul at that time was a desire to find my person and start a family.

So you think I would have been elated, but about a week before I realized I was pregnant I walked in on my guy and some other woman. It clearly wasn't a stable and honest relationship that I could lean into. And because I was pregnant and full of nesting hormones my fateful run-in that day nearly put me out of my mind with rage and grief and fear. The only person I had trusted in the depths of my vulnerability had betrayed me. And I was at this point fully committed to a civic and environmental campaign to save a very special piece of land that I had just

moved to (from that previously mentioned apartment sit), that was under threat to be developed and whose development would endanger an entire forest (the property was on the headwaters).

There are so many other factors that made my decision feel imperative even though it was never what I ever thought I'd do if I found I was pregnant. But for this writing let it be sufficient to say that with no support system, no committed partner, no friends or family nearby, no job and no money, and a fully commanding campaign to save the only home I found I just didn't see a way for me to say yes to this life.

It was an incredibly personal and painful decision. I also knew that there was no way I could undergo a clinical abortion. I fervently believe in access to them, but I was raised on herbal medicine and rarely had ever seen a doctor. For me the plants had to be the way. But with herbs you have a much narrower window of efficacy than a clinical abortion. As fate would have it when I discovered my pregnancy I was back east for a brief visit to my family before I was slated to accompany my younger sister on our first ever visit to our ancestral motherland. What I read said that herbs need to be employed within the first 8 weeks of pregnancy. I was six weeks from my last period and heading overseas for two weeks. I would need to take the herbs with me

and do the course as I traveled. I also read that the abortifacient herbs are really toxic and that once you do the course if they don't work thta you need to commit to a clinical abortion at that point because the damage done to the fetus could mean a damaged baby if carried to term. So I was committed to making sure the herbs worked because I knew I just couldn't handle a clinical abortion.

For one week I took two dropperfuls each (every three hours around the clock) of rue, black cohosh, blue cohosh as well as dong quai (for hormonal support) and eleuthero (for endurance). I knew I was taking lobelia as well but at this juncture it's hard for me to imagine that I was taking it in two dropperful doses, but I also don't remember having separate dosages for anything I was taking, so perhaps I did - which is just astounding because it is an intense pergative. I was also topically applying pennyroyal tincture over my womb. And I prayed. A lot. I talked to the spirit of my child A LOT. I constantly told it how much I loved it, and wanted it to come back to me someday. I explained to it that I was not yet able to give it a solid home or a good family.

I had also read that taking these herbs at this dose level should be done for no longer than one week. The toxicity after that point could cause lasting damage to my organs or cause me

to get severely sick. So for the first half of my trip I was putting heavy toxins into my body every three hours while I sat and met relatives for the first time or traveled to the village where my grandmother had grown up. It was surreal and painful, both emotionally and physically. The course of herbs gave me intense headaches and made me extremely nauseous. The headache would have just dulled to tolerable and my alarm would go off cueing me to take another round. Near the end it was incredibly hard for me to get the doses down. My body feeling the poison would resist intensely. It was very hellish*

Once the week was done there was nothing I could do but wait. At least I was feeling better each day that passed in which I didn't have to take anymore of the herbs. Luckily 3 days after I stopped the herbs I was sitting in a restaurant with my brother, sister and cousin and felt the blood let down. It was a wave of complicated emotions. Such immense relief and such unmatchable sorrow. I spent that day by the sea. I needed to be with the big water and the sunshine. It was a long road of recovery still for me. The herbs had worked. But the toxins and the stress had taken their toll and I went into a deep depression as well as a bodily fatigue I had never known.

We continued to work to save the land we lived on and eventually succeeded. It would take me nearly four years before I no longer felt despair and grief when I would think of the loss of that first pregnancy. But eventually it would become a piece of me, a peace had grown from that journey into the underworld. I grew immensely strong in spirit from having come through that dark time and knew in a way no one can unless they have faced that choice what a sacred responsibility it is to be a gatekeeper at the doorway to life. And noone save those endowed with that sacred responsibility can judge what it is to stand at that gate. There is a reason we are here though. And whatever our choices are each time there is a knock on that gate we will birth. We birth life. We birth death. We grow stronger either way. And we come to understand how inextricable those two forces are. I would never change my choice. IT forever changed me. I am who I am because of it.

*I wish to acknowledge that after this event, close friends would share my story with other women who found themselves for their own reasons needing to end a pregnancy and I never heard of anyone else making it through a full week of this course of herbs at this dose level. All of those people ended up regularly vomiting or feeling too weak or sick to complete. I eventually stopped

sharing what my recipe had been because it was really painful to hear stories of women who made themselves really sick and weak with herbs and then had to undergo a clinical abortion afterwards.

Five:

At 19, I became pregnant. This was a month after trying to get my tubes tied(I needed to be 21 for the state to pay for the surgery). I scoured the internet. I tried vitamin c as a suppository, but I don't remember the ratio. I got a horrible yeast infection and stopped. I started looking at How To's on diy abortion. Was like, what the hell is a tincture? What is pennyroyal? Parsley, I know what that is but don't think it was doing anything when I shoved it in my vagina.

I made an appointment to get a clinical abortion. Luckily one of the closest ones to me then was in a low income area and only cost \$40. I told one person and they offered to go with me. We biked there together, maybe ten plus miles. I only had \$11 and my friend gave me the rest. It was fast and only slightly painful. I stared at the dust floating in the air above me while it was happening and they gave out apple juice after. I biked back with my friend and had no bleeding or pain following. The person that

had cum inside me had no idea that anything had happened and I never talked to him again.

Then I was 21. My partner and I at the time were openly experimenting with herbal contraceptives at this time. I was much more familiar with plant medicine and herbal procedures at this point. During ovulation I was taking wild carrot(seed or flower I don't remember now) in the form of tea. Trying to do a tbsp or so in a cup of tea 3-4 times daily. I didn't have easy access to hot water(deep woods living with only a wood stove) so that method was difficult at the time. I don't believe I was consistent enough to gain any benefit from the wild carrot. Knowing I was at risk of being pregnant and not being confident in my work with wild carrot I started looking into the next step.

I started drinking mugwort tea in the evenings for the five days prior to when I expected my period. Three or four days into that, I also started taking black cohosh and dong quai in the form of tincture, 15 drops each 3-4 times daily(I don't remember if I was waking up at night to take the fourth dose or if I squeezed it into the day hours.

[This part may drop skeptics, but I'm going to include it as it was definitely a factor in this for me] A few days after my missed period, and while taking the herbs, my partner of the time did a

sex ritual on me (not with my direct knowledge in the moment, though it was fine). I experienced it as an extremely strong and thorough orgasm. Fifteen minutes later I was in the process of taking my morning dose and started bleeding. Cramps were tremendous and I was able to catch all of my blood and found a small cluster of the mycelial tissues. I did not have access to a pregnancy test during this process.

The next month I thought I was pregnant again (my cycle was rotating) I started taking herbs and bled a week late. I had no pain and decided it was a false alarm. My cycle continued on a five week rotation for a few months after that before settling again.

During all of this I was doing A LOT of research on herbal contraceptives and abortions. Through my own process of trauma and healing I was deeply uncomfortable with needing to rely on others and felt intense distrust of my being under the care of medical practitioners. I was scared I would end up with a surprise hysterectomy at the hands of a doctor. I was searching for other methods to sterilize myself.* I also had no access to money in my early twenties and felt really affected by the power that was stripped from me and the risks I faced when buying proper medical care wasn't an option. The seed for my connection to plants and herbalism is deeply embedded in those feelings. I

needed to find ways to feel strong in myself and I wanted to be a safe source of support, health, and healing for others that felt restrictions from mainstream systems, or who just wanted to create or hold onto a different way.

I had set up a “women’s” group at this same time, mostly for bonding. Two friends were concerned they were both pregnant at the same time. A group got together to look at each of their cervix (I wasn’t there for this event). They found that one had no blue tint to her cervix and they decided she wasn’t pregnant and she did end up bleeding within the week. The other did have a blue tint to her cervix. She made one cup of tansy tea and drank it. Felt it move down through her body and she started bleeding immediately. There was no other way to confirm pregnancy at the time, so mostly that one is anecdotal.

I read a bit about menstrual extraction and was really excited about finding a way to learn how to do that. Magically that winter, while trapped in the mountains this person showed up where I was living who had been trained as a midwife. My friends and I had been interested in meeting her for other reasons but one day she mentioned that she knew how to do this procedure and wanted to teach people how to do it. The next week she realized she was pregnant and offered to teach us on herself with a

del-em. I did most of the procedure myself and two others were there for support, one of them stepping in to get a feel for it. It was so long ago I don't remember much of the feel of it, besides going through the cervix and how much the uterus collapsed at the end. It was successful. Emotionally it was warm and sad and inspiring.

About 6 months after my herbal abortion an issue came up again. I was thinking one day about how my cycle had linked up with my friend who I was living with. But then she had started bleeding but I hadn't. I started getting really strong feels about how great having a baby would be and how happy it would make me. (For context, I was very against myself having a baby at this time.) Those feels are how I realized I was pregnant. Also eating became really difficult and uncomfortable for me and I was repulsed by almost everything. I don't remember if I confirmed with a test or not, a lot of time has passed.

For five days I made a tea, taken three times a day, of pennyroyal, angelica root, and ginger root. It was a decoction of ginger and angelica. I strained it and poured it hot over the pennyroyal and allowed it to seep for 15 minutes. I drank it as hot as I could. Day six I took a break. On day seven I started the same recipe and protocol again and started bleeding that day.

When I was 25 it felt like a portal to hell opened in my uterus:

This experience was extremely difficult for me in almost every way. First, the person this happened with did not, at any point, have any consent to cum inside me. This also coincided with me moving to a new state where I still needed housing and only had sporadic work available and was about to start school. I was also socially distracted from seeing old friends and meeting a lot of new people. So, by the time I remembered I had a situation I needed to deal with, I was already multiple days late, at least five.

I started with tansy by itself. 1-2 tbsp dried in a cup of hot water. Seeped for 15 minutes. Doing that 3 times a day. I had my first dose later in the day and could feel mild contractions. I let myself become distracted and didn't dose again for almost 12 hours. After that, taking my doses I could not feel any contractions and with each day I became more stressed.

At this time, this person realized I was pregnant. He, feeling that his "time was ticking", was upset that I wasn't trying to keep the baby. He offered no support and wouldn't offer financial support if I needed to go to a clinic. Then started calling me a bitch and his nemesis and bad mouthing me super hard. I stopped talking to him completely. With the emotional drama, plus my housing situation falling through, and the growing sense that

the herbs weren't going to work I became really stressed and started raising my doses a lot.

I switched at some point to the pennyroyal, angelica, ginger recipe(angelica and ginger decoction poured over pennyroyal and allowed to steep). I was taking herbs for a total of three weeks. I was getting really strong symptoms of toxicity from high dosing, but, doing the work on my own, I had let my stress take over my decision making.

I stopped taking herbs and realized, when talking to a friend, that I knew someone in my town that performed menstrual extractions. We talked and she offered to support me in that way. When she did the menstrual extraction she said that it seemed that I was about to bleed at any moment. But that is how I felt the entire time and still after the procedure, I didn't bleed. The menstrual extraction was mildly painful but mostly comfortable and I got to play music I enjoyed. The person I was working with I felt really safe around and I appreciated having another person around to vent some of that difficulty to. When I still wouldn't bleed, via recommendation, I went to one of those pro-life clinics that offer free ultrasounds and they told me they were receiving no heartbeat. So, through it all, the pregnancy was terminated but nothing would expel itself. I decided to take misoprostol to force

the contractions and prevent infection from an incomplete abortion. I started taking the pills as suppositories early in the day. I started bleeding by evening. I spent a lot of time in the bathroom, I bled a lot and was curled up in a ball of pain on the couch for hours in what a friend referred to as my “miso coma”.

After, I did nothing but lay in bed for three days listening to the soothing voice and words of James Baldwin. At day five I went on a class hike and became stimulated and continued to miscarry and bleed and was on the verge of vomiting for a couple hours. I did have a really nice moment with a bleeding heart(plant) I found myself laying next to. But I had to awkwardly part from my class til they finished their field trip. The icing on the cake for me was that, with how my body and emotions were affected in that process I was unable to work for two months (I was doing sex work exclusively at the time), and having a much higher rent than I was accustomed to, I ended up not having the money to even finish that year of schooling. Also that guy ran into a friend of mine and was bragging that I wouldn’t talk to him anymore because he had gotten me pregnant. Though late time with the herbs was a big issue, I’m deeply convinced that I had such a hard time actually aborting because of the negative relationship the other person had to the process, which was very different from my prior

experiences. I was constantly feeling really strong energetic pulls from him throughout the experience.

Though this was hard for me, the knowledge seeker in me was really interested in the wide variety of experiences the situation allowed me to have. I'm glad to better understand what people can experience in those moments.

I've also since had some serious health issues related to my liver that I believe to be sourced at overdosing on tansy and pennyroyal for weeks plus my dose of miso, combined with the ensuing drinking habit that followed for the next year. It's taken a few years of herbal support and conscious life switches to see shifts in my liver health and I still regularly have issues I face.

About a year ago I had another scare. I started taking herbs around conception. I was using a juniper tincture. Taking about 20 drops multiple times throughout the day for five days. That was at least five times a day, but really it was whenever I would think about it, which was more. I would take the tincture sporadically through the following couple weeks.

I don't know if the juniper offered any benefit to the process. I relate success to the following herbs I took. The two days before I expected my menstruation. I started drinking a tea of angelica root and mugwort. I would just steep it cold, in a quart of water, for

hours never actually straining it out until the next batch. It was about 2-3 tbsp of each, per quart. I would drink that throughout the day. That night before my expected period, I also ingested a weed edible. I became horribly weed sick and started bleeding with heavy painful contractions. It was an awful combo. I didn't realize it was my period at first and I had 70% convinced myself that I had somehow poisoned myself and was dieing. (I was able to alleviate the paranoia a couple hours in with rescue remedy essence) I felt mostly fine the next day, though spacey and exhausted. The situation did bring up old feelings of isolation and the circumstances of that moment weren't especially supportive and were unable to alleviate those feelings (I was on a road trip). That did feel hard. It was comforting to not have my period at all late though and I did collect the blood and found the mycelial tissue present.

Not too long ago I acquired supplies for home menstrual extractions with an MVA. I ended up pregnant again and because of liver issues would prefer not using herbs. The clinic option would have been \$1200 expected upfront.

I asked my friend who was relatively familiar with ME to do it for me and we set up a really cozy station in my room. I was laying in my partner's lap. It was so healing to be so comfortable

and supported in that moment. That session wasn't successful, so we did end up trying again on a second occasion as we were having a hard time getting suction with the device and getting the cannula in deep enough, though as I wasn't handling it, I'm not confident what the block really was. With those two sessions we hardly got any tissue or blood. I was almost 8 weeks pregnant with pretty tolerable symptoms but was struggling with stress and loss of motivation.

I decided to do it on myself and when I found the energy, I just did it. The hardest part was lining the speculum up so I could get a clear view of my cervix through a hand mirror. I had no issues with suction. I did have to pull the cannula all of the way out each time I emptied the MVA, which I didn't like having to do. The texture of the embryo and placenta was way different than I expected and, once I realized, was really obviously different from the rest of the blood. But the feeling was very similar to the sandpaper feel that's described towards the end. Once the speculum was in place it took me about 40 minutes, which I imagine would be less time with more experience and a better angle. There was a lot of blood and tissue and I bled for a couple days after. I was concerned about getting an infection after

opening my cervix so many times but it seems that my body is resistant to that type of issue.

* Most of those early adult years I was really interested in getting my tubes tied or finding some other method to sterilize myself. Some of this was influenced by someone I had been dating at the time and some from my response to trauma. Not to sway anyone's relationship with their own body, but for an accurate understanding of the experiences I shared, I just want to be clear that I'm very glad I didn't get my tubes tied at 19 or 21. I relate very differently to my body and my desires now in ways I would never have comprehended in those years.



Sourcing Supplies and Herbs

Research and buy from local sources and farms as you are able to.

Places to buy herbs online or over the phone:

Healing Spirits Farm

Pacific Botanicals

Starwest

Cutting Root Apothecary

Zack Woods Farm

Frontier Herbs- (not good quality, but cheaper)

Don't buy herbs for ingesting from occult shops as they are not necessarily acquired for physiological value and may sit around for longer periods, losing much of their potency.

How to Make Herbal Preparations:

Learningherbs.com

Sourcing the Abortion Pills:

<https://abortionondemand.org/>

Ships to 20 US States - \$239

aidaccess.org

Will ship anywhere including the US \$95 usd-process is through a doctor and legal under US law and FDA regulations (as of 2019).

womenonweb.org

Will only ship to countries where abortion is illegal \$70-90 Euros.

womenonwaves.org

Information on Abortion access in countries around the world, including local numbers for information.

womenonwaves.org/en/map/country

Find out if your country has misoprostol over the counter and what names it is sold as.

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Mail Order information and other info for purchasing pills worldwide:

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*Warning that this article link uses a lot of language about population control

